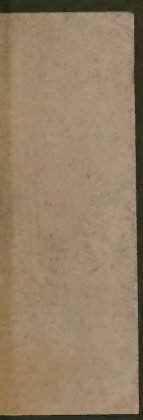
COLONIAL BALLADS, SONNETS AND OTHER VERSE

MARGARET J. PRESTON



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COLONIAL BALLADS, SONNETS AND OTHER VERSE

BY

MARGARET J. PRESTON

AUTHOR OF "SILVERWOOD," "BEECHENBROOK," "OLD SONG AND NEW," "CARTOONS," "FOR LOVE'S SAKE," ETC.

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To

MY FRIEND,

JEAN INGELOW,

FROM WHOSE BIRTH-PLACE SAILED THE VESSELS

THAT BROUGHT SOME OF THE EARLIEST ENGLISH COLONISTS

TO THE WESTERN WORLD.

What wilt thou walk abroad in, Muse of mine?
The violet peplos, such as in the shades
Of Mitylene's gardens, Lesbian maids
(Erinna and the rest) spun from the fine
Milesian wools? Or round thee wilt thou twine
Egypt's severer linen, till it lades
Thy brows as it did Miriam's dusky braids?
Or drape thee like Egeria at her shrine?
Or, as thy vestment, choose the cloth-of-gold,
Of later singers, richer dight than these,
Which thou mayst borrow, an unquestioned loan,
When want impels, to wrap thee from the cold?
Nay, Muse of mine! in robe of unpatched frieze,
Go, rather, thou, — if so it be thine own!

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SONNETS.

THE MOUNT OF VISION.

TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON, ON HIS LAST BIRTHDAY.

O PROPHET! standing on thy Nebo height,
Wrapt in thy rare, unworldly atmosphere,
With senses purged, with aspect large and clear,
Thy long-sought, life's Ideal looms in sight:
Here, Jordan at thy feet, — there, Hermon white;
And all between, the realms of promised cheer,
Wine, olives, milk and honey, now appear
Stretched vast before thee in the evening light.

What seeth the seer, as from the Mount of God
He gazes o'er the desert-travel, back
Past Sphinx and Pyramids' infinity?
A cloud-led, vatic pathway, bravely trod, —
A Bethlehem brightness o'er the forward track,
That gleams, glows, broadens, to the "Utmost Sea"!

"SIT, JESSICA."

As there she stood, that sweet Venetian night,
Her pure face lifted to the skies, aswim
With stars from zenith to horizon's rim,
I think Lorenzo scarcely saw the light
Asleep upon the bank, or felt how bright
The patines were. *She* filled the heavens for him;
And in her low replies, the cherubim
Seemed softly quiring from some holy height.

And when he drew her down and soothed her tears,
Stirred by the minstrelsy, with passionate kiss,
Whose long, sweet iterations left her lips
Trembling, as roses tremble after sips
Of eager bees, the music of the spheres
Held not one rhythmic rapture like to this!

IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY.

"THIS bit of paper, thumbed and dingy gray" —
The cicerone chattered — but I paid
No heed to him, nor even my footsteps stayed,
Until he droned, in his perfunctory way,
(He tells the story twenty times a day,) —
"Is one of Raphael's crayon studies made
For Della Sedia" —
Instant was I laid
Spell-bound, as if beneath some sovereign sway!

I touched the master's sleeve, I stood so near;
Watched his held breathing, as the incipient line
Took shape, and shadowed the supreme design,
Clear-drawn within his soul, and seemed to hear —
I saw the blot! — a quick, ecstatic tear
Drop, as the pencil fixed his thought divine!

KEATS'S GREEK URN.

When the young poet wrought so unaware
From purest Parian, washed by Grecian seas,
And stained to amber softness by the breeze
Of Attic shores, his Urn, antiquely fair, —
And brimmed it at the sacred fountain, where
The draughts he drew were sweet as Castaly's, —
Had he foreseen what souls would there appease
Their purer thirsts, he had not known despair!

About it long processions move and wind,
Held by its grace, — a chalice choicely fit
For truth's and beauty's perfect interfuse,
Whose effluence the exhaling years shall find
Unwasted: for the poet's name is writ
(Firmer than marble) in Olympian dews!

UNBRIDLED.

It might have been so much, — this life now done, —
So furrowed with accomplishment, so strong
To struggle for the right, oppose the wrong,
And be the first at every goal; for none
Went forth less weighted than this favored one,
Whom Nature, in her bounty, seemed to throng
With helps, his whole unhindered course along.
Yet to what end, now that the race is run?

The will, untamed as pampas-steed's, had known
No hard-set purpose — yielded to no rein,
Obeyed no curb — shirked labor's lasso-coil,
And roving masterless, with streaming mane,
Scorned, in its lawless liberty, to own
Duty's sharp check, and wear the gear of toil.

THE UNSEARCHABLE NAME.

When I attempt to give the power which I see manifested in the universe an objective form, personal or otherwise, it slips away from me, declining all intellectual manipulation. I dare not use the pronoun "He" regarding it; I dare not call it a "Mind;" I refuse to call it even a "Cause." — PROF. TYNDALL.

O CALM philosopher, so seeming meek,
Who on the midnight heavens dost gaze with awe,
And own the fathomless force behind the law,
Confessing that thy finitude is weak
To gauge infinity, when thou wouldst seek,
With eyes that are but mortal eyes, to draw
Within thy vision what mortal never saw,
Or utter what no human lips can speak: —
Thou "dare not call it 'He'?" — Then dare not so,
If underneath the mystery, thou art awed.
We talk of man thus: "he" who treads the sod:
Thou wilt not name it "Mind," or "Cause"? Too low
These earth-words comprehensible! Nay, go
Back to primordial truth, and call it God!

HAWTHORNE.

He stood apart — but as a mountain stands
In isolate repose above the plain,
Robed in no pride of aspect, no disdain,
Though clothed with power to steep the sunniest lands
In mystic shadow. At the mood's demands,
Himself he clouded, till no eye could gain
The vanished peak, no more, with sense astrain,
Than trace a footprint on the surf-washed sands.

Yet hidden within that rare, sequestered height,
Imperially lonely, what a world
Of splendor lay! what pathless realms untrod!
What rush and wreck of passion! What delight
Of woodland sweets! What weird winds, phantom-whirled!
And over all, the immaculate sky of God!

A BIT OF AUTUMN COLOR.

CENTRED upon a sloping crest, I gazed
As one enchanted. The horizon's ring
Of billowy mountains, flushed with sunsetting,
Islanded me about, and held me mazed,
With beauty saturate. Never color blazed
On any mortal palette that could fling
Such golden glamour over everything
As flashed from autumn's prism, till all was hazed
With opal, amber, sapphire, amethyst,
That shimmered, mingled, dusked to steely blue.
Raptured I mused: Salvator never drew
Its faintest semblance; Turner's pencil missed
Such culmination: yet we count them true
Masters. Behold what God's one touch can do!

AT ST. OSWALD'S.

WITHIN the church I knelt, where many a year
Wordsworth had worshipped, while his musing eye
Wandered o'er mountain, fell, and scaur, and sky,
That rimmed the silver circle of Grasmere,
Whose crystal held an under-world as clear
As that which girt it round; and questioned why
The place was sacred for *his* lifted sigh,
More than the humble dalesman's kneeling near.

Strange spell of Genius! — that can melt the soul
To reverence tenderer than o'er it falls
Beneath the marvellous heavens which God hath made,
And sway it with such human-sweet control
That holier henceforth seem these simple walls,
Because within them once a poet prayed!

GRASMERE, 1884.

ULTIMA THULE.

H. W. L.

Wrap the broad canvas close; furl the last sail;
Let go the anchor; for the utmost shore
Is reached at length, from which, ah! nevermore,
Shall the brave bark ride forth to meet the gale,
Or skim the calm with phosphorescent trail,
Or guide lost mariners amid the roar
Of hurricanes, or send — far echoing o'er
Some shipwrecked craft — the music of his "Hail!"

And he has laid his travel-garb aside;
And forth to meet him come the mystic band
Whom he has dreamed of, worshipped, loved so long —
The veiled Immortals, who, with holy pride
Of exultation, take him by the hand
And lead him to the inner shrine of Song.

ATTAR OF ROSES.

HERE in a sandal-box, with Persian lore
Gilded upon the slender vial (see!
Some love-line out of Hafiz it may be),
I keep imprisoned the delicious store
Of a whole Cashmere garden. O'er and o'er,
With every inhalation come to me
Light, song, breeze, color, — all the witchery
That crowds a thousand roses' golden core.

Would the wide field be better, where the way
Is free to whoso cares to pass? where none
May claim an overplus? where oft the sun
Scorches, and clouds beset the calmest day?
Thou know'st, who hast for me, through yea and nay,
Attared my thousand roses into one!

CIRCUMSTANCE.

"You may be what you will," the sciolist
Says sagely, sitting in the master's seat;
And straightway hastens glibly to repeat
Such echoing names, that all dissent is whist
To hear the records read, wherein consist
The hero-tales of ages; while defeat
Yields proof to him, infallible, complete,
That through weak will alone success is missed.

Yet round each life there crowds an atmosphere
Of strong environment for woe or weal,
That proves to one a joyous fostering power;
To one a fateful force, subversive, drear;
As damps, that nurse to perfect bloom the flower,
Rust to corrosion the elastic steel.

OUT OF NAZARETH.

Dear proud old land, — Judæa of our heart!
Our prophets, poets, kings, we claim of thee,
And own that all we have of good and free,
And brave and beautiful, is but a part
Of England's birthright-gift, because thou art
The fount of our ancestral blood, though we
Seem only an outlying Galilee
To thee, — the assenting nations' mightiest mart.

Why should our senses not be keen as thine,
Our eye as quick for color; our strong breath
For poet's song; our ear for music's call;
Since Nature's newest glories round us shine?
Wait the time's fulness: out of Nazareth
May come the availing prophet, after all!

NATURE'S COMFORTINGS.

I CANNOT bear this gloom of grief (I said)
Within shut walls: beneath the open sky
So pure in its inviolate calm, so high,
I will go forth, and lean my throbbing head
On Nature's all-compassionate heart, instead
Of human props, that find no more than I
An answer to the wild, importunate "why?"
That moans its questioning wail above my dead.

I passed without, beseeching Grief to stay;
The sweet blue air kissed down my sense of pain;
The strong, perpetual mountains seemed to steep
My wounds in balm; the breeze brushed tears away;
The sunshine soothed: and when I turned again
Within my door, lo! Grief had fallen asleep!

IN CRIPPLEGATE CHURCH.[1]

I STAND with reverence at the altar-rail,
O'er which the soft rose-window sheds its dyes,
And, looking up, behold in pictured guise
Its choirs of singing cherubs, — heaven's *All hail!*
Upon each lip, and on each brow a trail
Of golden hair, for here the poet's eyes
Had rested, dreaming dreams of Paradise,
As on yon seat he sat, ere yet the veil
Of blindness had descended.

Who shall say
That when the "during dark" had steeped his sight,
And on the ebon tablet flashed to view
His Eden, with its angels, mystic, bright,
There swept not his unconscious memory through
The quiring cherubs that I see to-day?

LONDON.

[1] The church in which Milton worshipped, and is buried.

COMFORT FOR THE KING.

Upon his carven couch the monarch lay,
Wrapt in Sidonian purples; but no trace
Of Bethlehem ruddiness was on his face,
Nor as a king he spake, — "I go the way
Of all the earth:" — but as a man who may
Find solace in the thought — that of the race,
Among its myriads, none should miss a place
Upon the path that he must tread that day.

Ah, human comfort! None but God is great
Enough for loneliness! Man in his dearth
Of help or hope, succumbing to his fate,
Finds what a tender reconcilement hath
This royal thought, to moss the flinty path,
— 'T is but at most *the way of all the earth!*

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

O MASTER of mysterious harmony!
Well hast thou proved to us the right divine
To wear thy name. The glorious Florentine
Had hailed thee comrade on the Stygian sea, —
Exiled from haunts of men, and sad as he;
And the strong angel of the inner shrine, —
Stooped he not sometimes to that soul of thine,
On messages of radiant ministry?

Thy spiritual breath was the cathedral air
Of the dead ages. Saints have with thee talked,
As with a friend. Thou knewest the sacred thrills
That moved Angelico to tears and prayer;
And thou, as in a daily dream, hast walked
With Perugino midst his Umbrian hills.

THE SIBYL'S DOUBT.[1]

"This throbbing, reasoning, passionate soul," she said,
"May be a mere secretion, hidden away
As life is hidden within this coil of clay,
So subtly that all search of ages dead
Has failed to probe its secret, or to shed
More light upon the Everlasting Yea
Than Plato knew: and so I grope to-day
Mid doubts no Academe has quieted."

What matters, then, if ill, or good, or glad, —
This life not worth the toil; this strife so brief,
That only ends in some Nirvana dream,
Or dark *perhaps*, that makes the future seem
Annihilate? No marvel she was sad,
This sibyl brooding in her unbelief!

[1] Towards the close of her life, George Eliot was accustomed to put forth the idea, in conversation, that "the soul may be nothing more than a secretion."

HAYDN'S LAST QUARTET.

Hin ist alle meine Kraft: alt und schwach bin ich.

WITHIN the old *maestro's* brooding brain
A yearning inspiration stirred once more;
And catching up the long-neglected score,
He sought with trembling hand to link a chain,
Wherewith to capture the æolian strain,
And cage it with his chords, as heretofore,
Ere it should flutter from his touch, and soar
Where never breath should weight its wings again.

His fingers feebly groped among the keys,
As moaning to himself, they heard him say,
"*Gone is my skill, and old and weak am I:*"
And when he ceased the labored movement, there
Was this one line, that in a plaintive sigh
Of sobbing iterations died away.

PRINCE DEUCALION.

It will be remembered that Bayard Taylor's drama "Prince Deukalion" was published at the time of his death.

THE closing act was reached, the drama done,
And the magician who had wrought the spell
Let drop the curtain. Tranced, we scarce could tell
Where lay his power, as, shifting one by one
The scenes, he showed us how the ages run
On toward that life where all perfections dwell.
Ending, he said, "Not mine, I deem full well,
To dare divine that *future* known to none."

What secret summons came, we cannot know;
But, on the instant turned, as though he heard
A voice beyond the close-drawn curtain, call —
And parting it with gesture calm and slow,
He stepped within, nor spake another word:
And now, behind the veil, he knows it all!

PRO REPUBLICA.

Not for thyself, O high, heroic soul!
Didst thou endure the rack of martyr-pain;
Not for thyself, thou caredst to maintain
So grandly the stern struggle, though the whole
Heart-yearning world, thrilled with one strange control,
Stood by with bated breath and eyes astrain,
Waiting, when thou the fearful fight shouldst gain,
To girdle earth with pæans to either pole.

No Roman falling on the victor's field,
Rang out, in dying, with sublimer breath
His *Pro Republica*, or fixed an eye
Of calmer sacrifice — that would not yield
Till bidden of Heaven — upon the face of Death
Than thou, who for our sakes hast dared to die.

COLONIAL BALLADS.

THE MYSTERY OF CRO-A-TÀN.

The first English colony was sent to America by Sir Walter Raleigh under the auspices of Sir Richard Grenville. The settlement was made on Roanoke Island in Albemarle Sound.

A. D. 1587.

I.

THE home-bound ships stood out to sea,
And on the island's marge,
Sir Richard waited restlessly
To step into the barge.

"The Governor tarrieth long," he chode,
"As he were loath to go:
With food before, and want behind,
There should be haste, I trow."

Even as he spake the Governor came : —
" Nay, fret not, for the men
Have held me back with frantic let,
To have them home again.

" The women weep ; — ' Ay, ay, the ships
Will come again,' (he saith,)
' Before the May : — Before the May
We shall have starved to death ! '

" I 've sworn return by God's dear leave,
I 've vowed by Court and Crown,
Nor yet appeased them. Comrade, thou,
Mayhap, canst soothe them down."

Sir Richard loosed his helm, and stretched
Impatient hands abroad : —
" Have ye no trust in man ? " he cried,
" Have ye no faith in God ?

" Your Governor goes, as needs he must,
To bear through royal grace,
Hither, such food-supply, that want
May never blench a face.

"Of freest choice ye willed to leave
What so ye had of ease;
For neither stress of liege nor law
Hath forced you over seas.

"Your Governor leaves fair hostages
As costliest pledge of care, —
His daughter yonder, and her child,
The child Virginia Dare.[1]

"Come hither, little sweetheart! So!
Thou 'lt be the first, I ween,
To bend the knee, and send through me
Thy birthland's virgin fealty,
Unto its Virgin Queen.

"And now, good folk, for my commands:
If ye are fain to roam
Beyond this island's narrow bounds,
To seek elsewhere a home, —

"Upon some pine-tree's smoothen trunk
Score deep the Indian name

[1] Virginia Dare, the granddaughter of Governor Whyte, was the first English child born in America.

Of tribe or village where ye haunt,
That we may read the same.

"And if ye leave your haven here
Through dire distress or loss,
Cut deep within the wood above,
The symbol of the cross.

"And now on my good blade, I swear,
And seal it with this sign,
That if the fleet that sails to-day
Return not hither by the May,
The fault shall not be mine!"

II.

The breath of spring was on the sea;
Anon the Governor stepped
His good ship's deck right merrily, —
His promise had been kept.

"See, see! the coast-line comes in view!"
He heard the mariners shout, —
"We 'll drop our anchors in the Sound
Before a star is out!"

"Now God be praised!" he inly breathed,
"Who saves from all that harms;
The morrow morn my pretty ones
Will rest within my arms."

At dawn of day, they moored their ships,
And dared the breakers' roar:
What meant it? Not a man was there
To welcome them ashore!

They sprang to find the cabins rude;
The quick green sedge had thrown
Its knotted web o'er every door,
And climbed the chimney-stone.

The spring was choked with winter's leaves,
And feebly gurgled on;
And from the pathway, strewn with wrack,
All trace of feet was gone.

Their fingers thrid the matted grass,
If there, perchance, a mound
Unseen might heave the broken turf:
But not a grave was found.

They beat the tangled cypress swamp,
If haply in despair
They might have strayed into its glade:
But found no vestige there.

"The pine! the pine!" the Governor groaned;
And there each staring man
Read in a maze, one single word,
Deep carven, — CRO-A-TÀN!

But cut above, no cross, no sign,
No symbol of distress;
Naught else beside that mystic line,
Within the wilderness!

And where and what was "Cro-a-tàn"?
But not an answer came;
And none of all who read it there
Had ever heard the name.

The Governor drew his jerkin sleeve
Across his misty eyes;
"Some land, may be, of savagery
Beyond the coast that lies;

"And skulking there the wily foe
In ambush may have lain:
God's mercy! Could such sweetest heads
Lie scalped among the slain?

"O daughter! daughter! with the thought
My harrowed brain is wild!
Up with the anchors! I must find
The mother and the child!"

They scoured the mainland near and far:
The search no tidings brought;
Till mid a forest's dusky tribe
They heard the name they sought.

The kindly natives came with gifts
Of corn and slaughtered deer;
What room for savage treachery
Or foul suspicion here?

Unhindered of a chief or brave,
They searched the wigwam through;
But neither lance nor helm nor spear,
Nor shred of child's nor woman's gear,
Could furnish forth a clue.

How could a hundred souls be caught
  Straight out of life, nor find
Device through which to mark their fate,
  Or leave some hint behind?

Had winter's ocean inland rolled
  An eagre's deadly spray,
That overwhelmed the island's breadth,
  And swept them all away?

In vain, in vain, their heart-sick search!
  No tidings reached them more;
No record save that silent word
  Upon that silent shore.

The mystery rests a mystery still,
  Unsolved of mortal man:
Sphinx-like untold, the ages hold
  The tale of CRO-A-TAN!

SIR WALTER'S HONOR.[1]

A. D. 1618.

I.

1.

"O MOTHER! fling thy fears away,
Bid sorrow from thy brow!
My father's ships, the sailors say,
Are in the offing now."

2.

"Nay, lad! Full oft before to me
Hath come the self-same tale;
A thousand times I 've scanned the sea,
And never seen his sail."

3.

"But hark, sweet mother! in the street
The folk make wild uproar:

[1] An incident in the life of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Haste! let us be the first to greet
His step upon the shore."

4.

"Ah, boy! how dare my heart believe?
How dare I crave, good lack!
While foes so plot and friends deceive,
To have thy father back?

5.

"They watch to seize and search his ship,
And oh! mine eyes grow dim,
And terror palsies heart and lip:
They lay their snares for him —

6.

"My noble lord, who weighed no pain,
Nor toil nor cost, I ween,
Nor ruth of savage lands, to gain
New kingdoms for his Queen.

7.

"Bermoothes' rocks that gulfed his masts,
And tempest-wrack and foam,

Are kinder than the King who blasts
The joy of coming home!"

II.

1.

With drooping sail and shattered mast,
Sir Walter's galleons lay
Beyond the bar, but soon they cast
Anchor in Plymouth Bay.

2.

He leaped to shore with bated breath,
For there, right full in view,
Stood his fair wife, Elizabeth,
And his fair son, Carew.

3.

"My Bess!" he cried, — "my Bess, my boy!"
As through the throng he pressed,
And caught her in his weary joy,
Dead-swooning, to his breast.

4.

And while he soothed her pale alarms
With words all passion-sweet,
He heard a troop of men-at-arms
Come clattering down the street.

5.

He turned to see, as on they rode
All dight in gallant sheen:
Then out spake he right merrily
With cheer of voice and mien:—

6.

"Ha, good my cousin! Scarce I thought
Such welcomings to win
As thy fair courtesy hath brought
To greet thy kith and kin![1]

7.

"Gramercy! I am fain to vow
I nevermore will roam,
Since with such knightly guise as now,
Ye hail the wanderer home!"

[1] Sir Lewis Stukely, who arrested Sir Walter Raleigh on his return from his last voyage, was his cousin.

8.

Sir Lewis quickly drew his blade,
As from his steed he sprang,
And on his kinsman's shoulder laid
Its weight with sudden clang.

9.

He gave no greet, but on the ear
His words did sharply ring:
"*Sir Walter, I arrest thee here*
By mandate of the King!"

10.

"*What hath he done?*" the boy Carew
Flashed forth with angry frown;
And from his father's shoulder drew
The naked weapon down.

11.

"'*What hath he done?*' Why, treason's taint
Hung o'er his head of old;
And he hath failed, though thrice he sailed,
To find the mine of gold;

12.

"And sheer against the King's commands,
Who craves all grace of Spain,
He left on Orinoco's sands
Full fifty Spaniards slain.

13.

"Nay! peace! What if they *were* the first
To fall upon thy crew?
The scant pretence of such defence
Is weak to bear thee through!"

14.

"Would God I were a man! I trow
My hand a thrust should deal," —
Out spake Carew, — "and thou shouldst know
The temper of my steel!"

15.

"Tush, boy!" Sir Lewis jeered in wrath,
"Let go thy puny wrest!
By Heaven! the fledgling eaglet hath
The daring of the nest!

16.

"Ho, forward, sturdy musketeers!
Aside the stripling fling!
Bold lad be he who interferes
With orders from the King!"

17.

And ere Sir Walter turned about,
And ere the truth he wist,
They drew the linkèd iron out,
And clasped it on his wrist.

18.

"Have off with him! Beshrew me, how
Young malapert doth frown!
But minding of his mother now
Will cool his courage down!"

19.

"Sir Lewis!" — and the boy Carew
Fast clenched his fist; — "thy son
Will blush with shame, some day, to name
The deed which thou hast done!"

III.

1.

'T was midnight: but in Plymouth yet
Went on the wassail-bout;
The early moon was just a-set,
And all the stars were out;

2.

When at Sir Walter's prison-bars
A muffled tap was heard:
And as his ear was bent to hear,
He caught the whispered word:

3.

"Haste, father, haste! the way is clear;
I've bribed the seneschal;
The warder o'er the henchmen's beer
Keeps riot in the hall.

4.

"I hold the key that opes the gates,
And at the water-stair,

In the moored barge, my mother waits, —
She waits to meet thee there.

5.

"Quick, father! catch thy doublet up,
Without a moment's stay:
Before they drain their latest cup
We must be far away.

6.

"Outside the bar a galley lies,
And ere the sun doth glance
Its earliest beam across the skies
We shall be safe in France."

7.

"Ah, boy! my boy! my brave Carew!
Why tempt thy father so?
I — loyal, conscience-clear, and true, —
What need have *I* to go?

8.

"My traitorous foes, once trusted friends,
Would be the first to say

I flout the laws and flee, because
I am as false as they."

9.

"Yet, father, come! Foul threats they bring,
Dark counsels they have planned;
And justice thou shalt never wring
From cold King James's hand!

10.

"My mother at the water's brink
Waits, all her fears awake;
And if escape should fail — I think —
I think her heart would break!"

11.

Too much! His bravery shrank to meet
The weight of such a blow;
And springing instant to his feet,
He answered, "*I will go!*"

12.

They groped adown the stony hall;
They found the door unbarred;

And in the shadow of the wall
They crossed the prison-yard.

13.

With stealthy steps they reached the shore,
And on its rapid way,
The boat, with softly-dipping oar,
Dropped down the silent bay.

IV.

1.

Across the starlit stream they steal
Without one uttered word;
The waters gurgling at the keel
Was all the sound they heard.

2.

The good French bark that soon would bear
Them hence, lay full in view;
"*An oar's length more, and we are there!*"
Whispered the boy Carew.

3.

They rocked within its shadow. Then
Sir Walter, under breath,
First spoke, and kissed and kissed again
Lady Elizabeth.

4.

"Nay, Bess, it must not, shall not be,
Whatever others can,
That I should like a dastard flee,
For fear of mortal man!

5.

"All Orinoco's mines of gold,
All virgin realms I claim,
Are less to me a thousand-fold
Than my untarnished name.

6.

"Put back the boat! Nay, sweet, no moan!
Thy love is so divine
That thou wouldst rather die than own
A craven heart were mine!

7.

"My purse, good oarsman! Pull thy best,
And we may make the shore,
Before the latest trencher-guest
Has left the warder's door.

8.

"Hist! not one other pleading word:
Life were not worth a groat,
If breath of shame could blur my name:
Put back! put back the boat!

9.

"Ah, Bess! . . . (she is too stunned to hear!)
But thou, my boy, Carew,
Shalt pledge thy vow, even here and now,
That faithful, tried, and true;

10.

"Thou 'lt choose, whatever stress may rise,
Whilst thou hast life and breath,
Before temptation, sacrifice;
Before dishonor, death!"

V.

1.

The boatman turned; he dared not bide,
Nor say Sir Walter nay;
And with his oars against the tide,
He labored up the bay.

2.

And when beside the water-stair,
With grief no words can tell,
They braced themselves at length to bear
The wrench of the farewell;

3.

The boy, with proud yet tearful eyes,
Kept murmuring under breath,
"*Before temptation, sacrifice;*
Before dishonor, death!"

THE LAST MEETING OF POCAHONTAS AND THE GREAT CAPTAIN.[1]

A. D. 1616.

In a stately hall at Brentford, when the English June
was green,
Sat the Indian Princess, summoned that her graces might
be seen,
For the rumor of her beauty filled the ear of court and
Queen.

There for audience as she waited, with half-scornful, silent
air,
All undazzled by the splendor gleaming round her every-
where,
Dight in broidered hose and doublet, came a courtier
down the stair.

[1] A reference to this interview between the "Lady Rebecca" and Captain John Smith may be found in Smith's *True Relation of Virginia.*

As with striding step he hasted, burdened with the
Queen's command,
Loud he cried, in tones that tingled, "*Welcome, welcome
to my land!*"
But a tremor seized the Princess, and she drooped upon
her hand.

"What! no word, my Sparkling-Water?[1] Must I come
on bended knee?
I were slain within the forest, I were dead beyond the
sea;
On the banks of wild Pamunkey, I had perished *but for
thee.*

"Ah, I keep a heart right loyal, that can never more
forget!
I can hear the rush, the breathing; I can see the eyelids
wet;
I can feel the sudden tightening of thine arms about me
yet.

"Nay, look up. Thy father's daughter never feared the
face of man,

[1] The signification of the word Pocahontas.

Shrank not from the forest darkness when her doe-like
footsteps ran
To my cabin, bringing tidings of the craft of Powha-
tan."

With extended arms, entreating, stood the stalwart Cap-
tain there,
While the courtiers press around her, and the passing
pages stare ;
But no sign gave Pocahontas underneath her veil of hair.

All her lithe and willowy figure quivered like an aspen-
leaf,
And she crouched as if she shrivelled, frost-touched by
some sudden grief,
Turning only on her husband, Rolfe, one glance, sharp,
searching, brief.

At the Captain's haughty gesture, back the curious cour-
tiers fell,
And with soothest word and accent he besought that she
would tell
Why she turned away, nor greeted him whom she had
served so well.

But for two long hours the Princess dumbly sate and bowed her head,
Moveless as the statue near her. When at last she spake, she said :
" White man's tongue is false. It told me — told me — *that my brave was dead.*

" And I lay upon my deer-skins all one moon of falling leaves,
(Who hath care for song or corn-dance, when the voice within her grieves ?)
Looking westward where the souls go, up the path the sunset weaves.

" Call me ' child ' now. It is over. On my husband's arm I lean ;
Never shadow, *Nenemoosa*, our twain hearts shall come between ;
Take my hand, and let us follow the great Captain to his Queen."

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY.

A. D. 1622.

"And now," said the Governor, gazing abroad on the
piled-up store
Of the sheaves that dotted the clearings and covered the
meadows o'er,
"'T is meet that we render praises because of this yield
of grain;
'T is meet that the Lord of the harvest be thanked for
His sun and rain.

"And therefore, I, William Bradford, (by the grace of
God to-day,
And the franchise of this good people,) Governor of Ply-
mouth, say,
Through virtue of vested power — ye shall gather with
one accord,
And hold, in the month November, thanksgiving unto
the Lord.

"He hath granted us peace and plenty, and the quiet
we 've sought so long;
He hath thwarted the wily savage, and kept him from
wrack and wrong;
And unto our feast the Sachem shall be bidden, that he
may know
We worship his own Great Spirit who maketh the har-
vests grow.

"So shoulder your matchlocks, masters: there is hunting
of all degrees;
And fishermen, take your tackle, and scour for spoil the
seas;
And maidens and dames of Plymouth, your delicate crafts
employ
To honor our First Thanksgiving, and make it a feast
of joy!

"We fail of the fruits and dainties — we fail of the old
home cheer;
Ah, these are the lightest losses, mayhap, that befall us
here;
But see, in our open clearings, how golden the melons lie;
Enrich them with sweets and spices, and give us the
pumpkin-pie!"

So, bravely the preparations went on for the autumn feast;
The deer and the bear were slaughtered; wild game from the greatest to least
Was heaped in the colony cabins; brown home-brew served for wine,
And the plum and the grape of the forest, for orange and peach and pine.

At length came the day appointed: the snow had begun to fall,
But the clang from the meeting-house belfry rang merrily over all,
And summoned the folk of Plymouth, who hastened with glad accord
To listen to Elder Brewster as he fervently thanked the Lord.

In his seat sate Governor Bradford; men, matrons, and maidens fair;
Miles Standish and all his soldiers, with corselet and sword, were there;
And sobbing and tears and gladness had each in its turn the sway,
For the grave of the sweet Rose Standish o'ershadowed Thanksgiving-Day.

And when Massasoit, the Sachem, sate down with his
hundred braves,
And ate of the varied riches of gardens and woods and
waves,
And looked on the granaried harvest, — with a blow on
his brawny chest,
He muttered, "The good Great Spirit loves His white
children best!"

THE PRICE OF A LITTLE PILGRIM.

A. D. 1621.

"Go, wind the signal-horn, and bid
My band of trusty men
Come stern and grim, in fighting trim,
That I may choose me ten.

"They may not wait to kiss their wives,
For there 's a life at cost, —
A tender one, — the widow's son,
Ralph Billington, is lost:

"The pretty lad that often drew
My sword, and vowed that yet
He 'd march away some summer day
And capture Aspinet."

So spake the Plymouth Governor,
And at the signal sound

Forth came the band at his command,
And crowded eager round.

"Ten only," Governor Bradford said,
"Will fill the boat enow;
I want but ten strong-handed men,
Now which of you will go?"

They shouted, "I!" and "I!" and "I!"
"Nay, hold!" he bade, "I'll find
Some Gideon-test to mark the best;
The rest shall bide behind.

"Ye who are fathers, — ye whose homes
Are glad with children's joy, —
Your quest, I wot, will slacken not,
Till ye have found the boy."

The shallop manned, they searched the coast,
They beat the tangled wild;
And sought to trace, in many a place,
Some tidings of the child.

They steered through silent, sheltered coves,
They skimmed the marshes wide;

And all around the shallows wound,
With Squanto [1] for their guide.

At length they saw a curl of smoke
Float o'er the distant trees;
And all about, the whoop and shout
Came blown upon the breeze.

Scarce had they landed, when the cry
Of "*Yengese!*" [2] rent the air;
And even before they touched the shore
The foe was yelling there,

Each with his arrow drawn to head:
"Stay! stay!" cried Squanto, "let
True braves be friends: our Sachem sends
To you his calumet.

"The mother in her wigwam weeps,
Bereft of peace and joy;
Now we would know if it be so
That ye have found her boy."

[1] One of the earliest friends of the Plymouth Colony.

[2] The Indian term for the English, and the original of *Yankees*.

"*Ugh!*" growled the wily Aspinet;
"What will the Yengese grant,
If I set loose the white papoose,
And bring him from Nahant?"

"Name what ye will," the Captain cried,
"So much we prize his life!"
The Sachem heard, and with brief word
Muttered, "A knife! a knife!"

"Good!" and the Captain grimly smiled
Aside: "And yet I trow
The dame will be scarce pleased that we
Should rate her boy so low!

"Go, Squanto, hither fetch the lad;
And lest it will not do,
For *one* jack-knife to buy a life,
Why, Squanto, give him *two!*"

THE FIRST PROCLAMATION OF MILES STANDISH.

November, A. D. 1620.

"Ho, Rose!" quoth the stout Miles Standish,
As he stood on the Mayflower's deck,
And gazed on the sandy coast-line
That loomed as a misty speck

On the edge of the distant offing, —
"See! yonder we have in view
Bartholomew Gosnold's 'headlands.'
'T was in sixteen hundred and two

"That the Concord of Dartmouth anchored
Just there where the beach is broad,
And the merry old captain named it
(Half swamped by the fish) — Cape Cod.

"And so as his mighty 'headlands'
Are scarcely a league away,

What say you to landing, sweetheart,
And having a washing-day?

"For did not the mighty Leader
Who guided the chosen band
Pause under the peaks of Sinai,
And issue his strict command —

"(For even the least assoilment
Of Egypt the spirit loathes) —
Or ever they entered Canaan,
The people should wash their clothes?

"The land we have left is noisome,
And rank with the smirch of sin;
The land that we seek should find us
Clean-vestured without and within."

"Dear heart" — and the sweet Rose Standish
Looked up with a tear in her eye;
She was back in the flag-stoned kitchen
Where she watched, in the days gone by,

Her mother among her maidens,
(She should watch them no more, alas!)

And saw as they stretched the linen
To bleach on the Suffolk grass.

In a moment her brow was cloudless,
As she leaned on the vessel's rail,
And thought of the sea-stained garments,
Of coif and of farthingale;

And the doublets of fine Welsh flannel,
The tuckers and homespun gowns,
And the piles of the hosen knitted
From the wool of the Devon downs.

So the matrons aboard the Mayflower
Made ready with eager hand
To drop from the deck their baskets
As soon as the prow touched land.

And there did the Pilgrim Mothers,
"On a Monday," the record says,
Ordain for their new-found England
The first of her washing-days.

And there did the Pilgrim Fathers,
With matchlock and axe well slung,

Keep guard o'er the smoking kettles
That propt on the crotches hung.

For the trail of the startled savage
Was over the marshy grass,
And the glint of his eyes kept peering
Through cedar and sassafras.

And the children were mad with pleasure
As they gathered the twigs in sheaves,
And piled on the fire the fagots,
And heaped up the autumn leaves.

"Do the thing that is next," saith the proverb,
And a nobler shall yet succeed: —
'T is the motive exalts the action;
'T is the doing, and not the deed;

For the earliest act of the heroes
Whose fame has a world-wide sway
Was — to fashion a crane for a kettle,
And order a washing-day!

ST. BOTOLPH'S CHIMES.

A. D. 1640.

A Puritan and his little daughter speak on their churchward way.

"O FATHER, I wish I could go to church
As we did in the dear old times,
When we waited to hear the Sunday cheer
Of St. Botolph's morning chimes!

"'T was lovely to walk through leafy lanes
In the beautiful English May;
And I marvel now, as I think of it, how
You ever could come away.

"I want to go back to my oaken seat,
Where the great round oriel shed
Its crimsons and blues and golden hues,
All over my hands and head.

"As I watched their glory, the service seemed
So holy and rich and bright!

How tender the glow beside this snow,
All sheeted and dead and white!

"And the carbines, father, — they only hung,
At home, in the great oak hall:
Here, we take them abroad to the house of God,
Yet shiver with fear, for all!

"Oh, to mix with the crowd in the dear old street,
In safety and warmth and ease!
Oh, to wait for the swells of St. Botolph's bells,
In Boston beyond the seas!"

"Nay, daughter! it irks my heart to hear
Thee hanker, as those of old,
With tears on thy cheeks, for Egyptian leeks,
Because thou art scared and cold.

"Why, where is the hero-spirit, child?
Thy mother forsook her Devon
For an exile here, with a trust as clear
As if she were going to Heaven!

"Yea, over *thy* face the oriel's glint
Might shimmer with warming glow;

But for *me* the touch of the priestly clutch
Was chiller than Shawmut's [1] snow!

"I 'm willing to fight for leave to pray,
And wade with my carbine slung
On my shoulder, and so all chimes forego
St. Botolph hath ever rung,

"To carry thee thus to the church to-day,
As stoutly my strong arm can,
And order my faith as my conscience saith,
A free and a fearless man!

"But sweetheart! patiently thou must wait,
For I dream of an end of pains,
In which thou shalt walk in tender talk,
Through better than English lanes,

"With comrades as kind as ever strayed
Beside thee o'er Lincoln leas,
Or listened betimes to St. Botolph's chimes,
In Boston beyond the seas!"

[1] The Indian name of the peninsula on which Boston is built.

THE PURITAN MAIDEN'S MAY-DAY.

A. D. 1686.

Ah, well-a-day! The grandams say
That they had merry times
When they were young, and gayly rung
The May-day morning chimes.

Before the dark was gone, the lark
Had left her grassy nest,
And, soaring high, set all the sky
Athrob from east to west!

The hawthorn-bloom with rich perfume
Was whitening English lanes,
The dewy air was everywhere
Alive with May-day strains;

And laughing girls with tangled curls,
And eyes that gleamed and glanced,

And ruddy boys with mirth and noise,
Around the May-pole danced.

Ah me! the sight of such delight,
The joy, the whirl, the din,
Such merriment, such glad content, —
How *could* it be a sin?

When children crowned the May-pole round
With daisies from the sod,
What was it, pray, but their child's way
Of giving thanks to God?

The wild bee sups from buttercups
The honey at the brim:
May I not take their buds and make
A posy up for Him?

If, as I pass knee-deep through grass
This May-day cool and bright,
And see away on Boston Bay
The lines of shimmering light,

I gather there great bunches fair
Of May-flower as I roam,

And with them round my forehead crowned,
Go ladened with them home:

And then, if Bess and I should dress
A May-pole with our wreath,
And just for play, this holiday,
Should dare to dance beneath,

My father's brow would frown enow:
"Child! why hast thou a mind
For Popish days and Romish ways,
And lusts we've left behind?"

Our grandam says that her May-days,
With mirth, and song, and flowers,
And lilt of rhymes and village chimes,
Were happier far than ours.

If, as I ween, upon the green
She danced with merry din,
Yet lived to be the saint I see,
How can *I* count it sin?

LADY YEARDLEY'S GUEST.

1654.

'T was a Saturday night, mid-winter,
And the snow with its sheeted pall
Had covered the stubbled clearings
That girdled the rude-built "Hall."
But high in the deep-mouthed chimney,
'Mid laughter and shout and din,
The children were piling yule-logs
To welcome the Christmas in.

"Ah, so! We 'll be glad to-morrow,"
The mother half-musing said,
As she looked at the eager workers,
And laid on a sunny head
A touch as of benediction, —
"For Heaven is just as near
The father at far Patuxent
As if he were with us here.

"So choose ye the pine and holly,
And shake from their boughs the snow;
We 'll garland the rough-hewn rafters
As they garlanded long ago, —
Or ever Sir George went sailing [1]
Away o'er the wild sea-foam, —
In my beautiful English Sussex,
The happy old walls at home."

She sighed. As she paused, a whisper
Set quickly all eyes astrain:
"*See! See!*" — and the boy's hand pointed —
"*There 's a face at the window pane!*"
One instant a ghastly terror
Shot sudden her features o'er;
The next, and she rose unblenching,
And opened the fast-barred door.

"Who be ye that seek admission?
Who cometh for food and rest?
This night is a night above others
To shelter a straying guest."

[1] Sir George Yeardley, Governor of the Colony of Virginia, in 1626.

Deep out of the snowy silence
A guttural answer broke:
"I come from the great Three Rivers,
I am chief of the Roanoke."

Straight in through the frightened children,
Unshrinking, the red man strode,
And loosed on the blazing hearthstone,
From his shoulder, a light-borne load;
And out of the pile of deer-skins,
With look as serene and mild
As if it had been his cradle,
Stepped softly a four-year child.

As he chafed at the fire his fingers,
Close pressed to the brawny knee,
The gaze that the silent savage
Bent on him was strange to see;
And then, with a voice whose yearning
The father could scarcely stem,
He said, to the children pointing,
"I want him to be like *them!*

"They weep for the boy in the wigwam:
I bring him, a moon of days,

To learn of the speaking paper;
To hear of the wiser ways
Of the people beyond the water;
To break with the plough the sod;
To be kind to papoose and woman;
To pray to the white man's God."

"I give thee my hand!" And the lady
Pressed forward with sudden cheer;
"Thou shalt eat of my English pudding,
And drink of my Christmas beer. —
My darlings, this night, remember
All strangers are kith and kin, —
This night when the dear Lord's Mother
Could find no room at the inn!"

. . . . . .

Next morn from the colony belfry
Pealed gayly the Sunday chime,
And merrily forth the people
Flocked, keeping the Christmas time;
And the lady, with bright-eyed children
Behind her, their lips a-smile,
And the chief in his skins and wampum,
Came walking the narrow aisle.

Forthwith from the congregation
Broke fiercely a sullen cry;
"*Out! out! with the crafty red-skin!*
Have at him! A spy! A spy!"
And quickly from belts leaped daggers,
And swords from their sheaths flashed bare,
And men from their seats defiant
Sprang, ready to slay him there.

But facing the crowd with courage
As calm as a knight of yore,
Stepped bravely the fair-browed woman
The thrust of the steel before;
And spake with a queenly gesture,
Her hand on the chief's brown breast:
"*Ye dare not impeach my honor!*
Ye dare not insult my guest!"

They dropped, at her word, their weapons,
Half-shamed as the lady smiled,
And told them the red man's story,
And showed them the red man's child;

And pledged them her broad plantations,
That never would such betray
The trust that a Christian woman
Had shown on a Christmas-Day!

THE QUEEN OF PAMUNKEY.[1]

A. D. 1676.

"WHAT! Ho!" Sir William Berkeley cried, with hot, impetuous air,
As scowlingly his seat he took within the Governor's chair;
"She comes, forsooth, with savage state, to make the Council stare.

"Commend a woman for her wiles! We English never can
(She knows it well,) as gruffly deal with woman as with man;
And so she thinks to cozen us with some deceitful plan.

"Well, bid the burgesses to place, and let this Queen appear, —

[1] Pamunkey was a district lying between the York River and the James. Sir William Berkeley was Governor of the colony of Virginia from 1641 to 1677.

This Cleopatra of the woods, — in all her feathered gear:
And yet, mayhap, the aid I 've asked, she comes to say, is near."

The words were on Sir William's lip, when wide the door was flung,
And up the chamber strode the Queen, her band of braves among,
The " wampum-peak " of sovereignty about her forehead strung.

A silver frontlet crowned her brow, King Charles's gift to her,
And close about her stately form was wrapped a robe of fur,
Whose fringe of shells at every step shook with a tinkling stir.

Beside her walked a slender boy. "My son," she proudly said, —
" The chief of broad Pamunkey's lands, which now ye hold instead,
Snatched from him, since the King, whose word once ruled them all, is dead."

"Now hold!" Sir William stoutly clashed. "Have you naught else to tell
Than that stale story of the wrongs we 've learned to know so well?
Betwixt us and the setting sun your tribes have room to dwell."

She strained the deer-skin round her form with a right regal mien,
As though it were a purple robe and she a crownèd Queen,
And stepped before the daïs, and spake with accent bold and keen: —

"Yea, room enough: then wherefore wrest our lands, as ye have done,
And sow with wheat our hunting-grounds, and level one by one
Our forests? Let the *pale-face* go, and seek the setting sun!

"Ye basely snared and slew my chief. The boy I lead to-day

Is but the broken arrow-shaft, whose head is wrenched
away:
I would his arm were strong enough to strike, and scalp,
and slay!

"Yet ye — ye stoop to ask my aid against your fiercer
foes;
With craven lures ye bribe my braves their purpose to
disclose:
I tell you that my warriors wait to slay the first who
goes!"

She faced the Council with a scorn too stern to ask re-
dress;
Then turned, and with her sullen train adown the hall
did press.
"Good lack!" Sir William growled, "I vow she flaunts
it like Queen Bess!

"And yet without her tribe to aid, I 'm fain to use
delay,
And watch these whooping savages make inroads day
by day,
Whilst I, bereft of succor, see my mastery melt away.

"I 've held for more than thirty years the royal Governor's chair;
I 'll hold it to the bloody end, as here and now, I swear!
Out on it! Shall the Lion cower before the skulking Bear?"

DORRIS' SPINNING.

A. D. 1740.

She sat at the upper chamber, — 't was a summer of long ago, —
And looked through the gable window at the river that ran below,
And over the quiet pastures, and up at the wide blue sky,
And envied the jay his freedom as he lazily flitted by.

Yet patiently at her spinning, in a halo of happy light,
She wrought, though a shimmer rippled the heads of the wheat in sight, —
Though the garden was spilling over its cups on the fragrant day,
And the hollyhocks at the doorway had never looked half so gay.

She saw, as her wheel kept whirling, the leisure of Nature, too, —
The beautiful holiday weather left nothing for her to do:

The cattle were idly grazing, and even the frisky sheep,
Away in the distant meadows, lay under the shade asleep.

So sitting, she heard sweet laughter, and a bevy of maidens fair,
With babble of merry voices, came climbing the chamber stair: —
"O Dorris! how can you bear it, to drone at your spinning here?
Why, girl! it 's the heart of summer, the goldenest time of year!

"Put out of your hand the distaff, this wearisome whirl relax, —
There are things that are gayer, Dorris, than sitting and spinning flax:
Come with us away to the forest; when it rains is the time to ply
Such tiresome tasks — and to-day is the rarest of all July!"

With a face that was softly saddened, sweet Dorris looked up and said,

As she ravelled a bit of tangle, and twisted again her thread: —

"Nay, nay, I must do my spinning! it would n't be kind or right

That the loom should be kept a-waiting; my hanks must be done to-night.

"Ay, surely, the day *is* lovely! It tugs at my very heart

To look at its drifting beauty, nor share in its joy my part:

I may not go forth to meet it, but the summer is kind, you see,

And I think, as I sit at my spinning — I think it will come to me!"

So the frolicsome maidens left her, with something of mild surprise

That Dorris should choose a duty, with pleasure before her eyes;

Not dreaming that when her mother her "dozens" should count up-stairs,

And kiss her, and say, "*My darling!*" her day would be glad as theirs.

So she minded her wheel, and blithely she sang as she twirled it round,
And cunningly from her fingers the delicate fibre wound;
And on through the sunny hours, that neither were sad nor long,
She toiled, in her sweet obedience, and lightened her toil with song: —

[*She sings.*]

"Come hither, happy birds,
With warbling woo me,
Till songs that have no words
Melt through and through me!
Come, bees, that drop and rise
Within the clover,
Where yellow butterflies
Go glancing over!
O roses, red and white,
And lilies, shining
Like gilded goblets bright
With silver lining, —
Each to my window send
Gifts worth the winning,
To cheer me as I bend
Above my spinning!

"O ripples on the sand,
That break in beauty;
O pines that stiffly stand
Like guards on duty;
Green meadows, where this morn
The scythes were mowing;
Soft slopes, where o'er the corn
The wind is blowing;
White clouds above the hill,
That sail together;
Rich summer scents, that fill
This summer weather, —
All bring the sweets you 've found
Since morn's beginning,
And come and crowd them round
My day of spinning!"

FAST-DAY SPORT.

A. D. 1648.

"SHAME, shame upon ye, godless lads,
To take your matchlocks down,
And to the forest hie for game,
When all the folk in town
Were gathered in the meeting-house,
In Sabbath garb arrayed,
To fast and pray this solemn day,
As Governor Winthrop bade!

"Ye think, perchance, I failed to mark
Some empty places there:
Nay, nay, I do my duty, lads,
Though ye may mock and stare.
I ween, despite your many smirks,
When all is said and done,
Ye 'll think the hare ye dangle there
Was hardly worth the fun.

"I 've copied fair your names, young sirs,
'Trespass — one shilling nine' —
And governor's grandsons though ye be,
I wot ye 'll pay the fine ;
It should be doubled for the sin
Of such example set ;
I'm sorely sad a Boston lad
So strangely could forget.

"Ye *did not?* Ha! the bold offence
Was a deliberate one?
Ye *meant* to scout the Fast-Day, when
Ye went with dog and gun?
Out on such worldly lawlessness!
Ye well deserve to be
Left in the lurch with King and Church
In Suffolk by the sea!

"It ought to make the crimson shame
Your braggart faces flood,
When ye remember that your veins
Are warm with Winthrop blood!
Now had ye been Sir Harry's chicks,
To do and dare with such

Pert looks as send my hair on end,
I had not cared so much.

"But Governor Winthrop's grandsons! Heigh!
How godless folk will prate:
'He cannot make his household keep
The Fast-Day of the state!'
Nay, do I hear aright? Ye say
He gave you leave to go
To-day and track (alack! alack!)
The rabbits through the snow?

"Ye look so roguish, scarce I think
Ye mean the word ye spake;
But since ye 've dared with bold affront
The righteous law to break,
Though even the Governor's self forget
His bounden duty, — mine
Is clear: Ye 'll pay this very day
Each farthing of your fine!"

GREENWAY COURT.

A. D. 1748.

Lord Fairfax sat before the fire,
Within his forest hall,
Where antlers wide on every side
Hung branching from the wall.

Around the casements howled the wind,
The snow was falling deep,
And at his feet, crouched in the heat,
His stag-hounds lay asleep.

They heard a horse's hoofs without,
Above the wintry roar,
And with a bay they sprang away
To guard the opening door;

And if their master had not chid,
With instant word and frown,

They quick had met with fierce onset
The guest, and dragged him down.

"Shame! Shame! Prince Charles!" Lord Fairfax cried;
"Off, Berkeley! With such sport,
No friend, I trow, we welcome so
Who comes to Greenway Court."

He eyed the stripling, straight and tall;
He marked his stalwart frame;
And with a rare and knightly air,
He questioned of his name.

"Why, you are but a lad," he said,
"And wherefore should you roam
So far away, this wintry day,
From all the sweets of home?

"At Greenway Court I dwell alone,
A soured and saddened man;
With leave to find far from my kind
Such solace as I can.

"But you, — why break away so soon,
And all youth's joys forego

To seek the work a man might shirk,
And miss your boyhood so?

"Yes, I have acres without count,
That needs must be surveyed;
But what can you, a stripling, do
With none beside to aid?"

The boy's blue eyes shot steel-like clear;
And from his forehead fair,
Fresh with the sheen of scarce sixteen,
He shook his Saxon hair: —

"I am a widow's son," he said —
Proud were his look and tone —
"The staff and stay, I dare to say,
My mother calls her own.

"With rod and chain I mean to walk
The wilds without a dread;
God's care, I 'm sure, will keep secure
The boy who wins his bread."

"Ay, will He so!" Lord Fairfax cried,
"And ere my days are done,

God wot, I 'll hear some word of cheer
About this widow's son.

"But now forget your rod and chain,
For, on the morrow morn,
We 'll be away by dawn of day,
With huntsman, hound, and horn.

"What! '*Know no woodcraft? Never brought*
A pair of antlers down?'
Is that the way they rear to-day
The lads within the town?

"As sure as Shenandoah flows
In front of Greenway Court,
I promise you a buck or two
Shall grace your maiden sport."

The Christmas hunt was o'er. The hearth
Blazed bright with knots of pine,
And host and guest, with whetted zest,
Before it supped their wine.

"Right merry sport we 've had to-day;
And now, if any bid
Tell who" (he laughed) "taught you woodcraft,
Why, say, 'Lord Fairfax did.'"

He called a huntsman: "Saddle Duke,
Without a moment's loss,
And lift, and lay, as best you may,
That fattest buck across;

"And straight to Alexandria bear
The message: *That her son*
Sends his first sport from Greenway Court
To Mistress Washington." [1]

[1] Thomas, Lord Fairfax, after a love disappointment that embittered his life, retired to his boundless acres on the Shenandoah, and there built "Greenway Court," where he lived in rude baronial style. He was always fond of saying that he had taught George Washington, when a lad, to hunt.

THE BOYS' REDOUBT.

October, A. D. 1775.

In continental Buff-and-Blue,
With lappets richly laced,
Beneath the shade the elm-trees made,
A martial figure paced.

Along the sluggish Charles's banks
He bent at length his way,
Just as the gun, at set of sun,
Went booming o'er the Bay.

His soul was racked with doubt and strife,
Despondence gloomed his eye;
He needs must bear his weight of care
Out to the open sky.

The breeze that flapped his soldier's cloak,
The woods so broad and dim,

The tides whose sway no bonds could stay,
All seemed so free to him!

Yet the young nation that had wrung,
Beyond the angry seas,
From savage grace, a refuge-place,
To pray as they might please, —

Must it be hounded from its haunts?
Be fettered at the stake?
Be forced again to wear the chain
It risked its all to break?

His step grew heavier with the thought,
His lips less firm were set:
It could not be that such as he
Must yield! — and yet — and yet —

How could they even hope to win
A single fight, in lack
Of everything, while England's king
Had Europe at his back?

Thus musing sad beside the Charles,
He saw the Cambridge boys,

An eager band, pile up the sand
With roar of riot noise.

"Ha! lads, what do you here?" he said,
Arrested by their shout.
"*What do we here?* Why, give us cheer;
We 're building a redoubt!

"Who knows how soon Lord Howe may come,
And all his lion cubs,
With growls and snarls, straight up the Charles,
In his old British tubs?

"And creeping from them in the dark,
As quiet as a mouse,
Now what if they should snatch away,
Right out of 'Vassal House,'[1]

"Our new-made chief; before a man
Has leave to fire a gun?
That ends it! For there 'll be no war
Without a Washington!

[1] Afterwards "Craigie House," — so long the residence of the poet Longfellow, and at the period of this ballad, Washington's headquarters.

"Our fathers' hands are filled with work;
Besides, they 're grieving still
For Warren, and the gallant band
That fell at Bunker Hill.

"So we will help them as we can:
You wear the Buff-and-Blue;
Yet we aver, we 're ready, sir,
To fight as well as you.

"May be you 're on the General's staff:
Then say we Cambridge boys
Will yell and shout from our redoubt
With such a savage noise,

"That all the vessels in the Bay
Will hear the wild uproar,
And swear again that Prescott's men
Are lining all the shore!"

"Brave lads!" the soldier said, and raised
The cap that hid his brow;
"Some day, some day, I 'll surely pay
The debt I owe you now!

"Your high, heroic, mettled hearts,
Your faith that wavers not,
To me are more than cannon's store,
Or tons of shell and shot.

"What people ever fails to gain
The patriot's dearest prize,
When '*die or win*' is blazing in
The very children's eyes?

"No need to bear the General word
Of tasks so rich in cheer:
He makes his due salute to you, —
You see the General here!"

BALLAD AND OTHER VERSE.

THE SILENT TRYST.

TO M. C. L.

I.

Now that you are in Florence, go
To San Lorenzo. The church, you know,
Holds Michael's miracle carved in stone, —
The brooding figure that under the shade
Of its monk-like cowl, severe and lone,
Watches you till you grow afraid
It may step from its niche, and ask you why
You dare intrude with a curious eye
Thus on its dusk domain of thought.
Study the mystery there inwrought;
For the realm of Art, I think, will fail
To show you a greater. Gaze your fill,
Search for the secret, if you will,

Until you have gotten behind the veil
Of the palpable marble. None the less
The cunning escapes; and you 'll confess
That what is the wizardry of the spell,
Angelo's self alone could tell.

II.

But other than this is the reason why
I point you to San Lorenzo. Nigh
To its moss-grown court is a cloister wall:
Enter and climb its stony stair,
And the guide will show for a single paul
The great Laurentian treasures. There,
Mid luminous missals musk-enrolled,
And psalters that glisten and gleam with gold,
And manuscripts crusted with such gems
As smother in Eastern diadems,
Is a pair of portraits I bid you seek,
In a vellum tome, shut face to face;
Laura, the lustre on her cheek
Like a Provence rose, in its fadeless grace;
And Petrarch, fresh as he walked the street
That morn in Avignon, there to meet
His fate in the thrall of the random glance
That held him a captive evermore.

III.

What matter, the lady looked askance,
In the far forgotten days of yore,
While here, through the ages, brow to brow,
And lip to lip, as you see them now,
These lovers in dreaming trance have lain?
If not in the flesh, one clear blue vein
Throbbed to his touch, — if he did not dare
Finger a strand of her flossy hair, —
How time hath avenged him! Here to lie,
While over the world's unquiet life
Swept endless trouble and change and strife;
To lie in such calm — his cheek close pressed
To temples whose flush can never die,
Her loosened tresses across his breast,
That shall not bleach as the years go by!

IV.

I wonder, when marvellous Tuscan nights
Are a-thrill with a thousand-toned delights,
When the sensitive silence feels the bliss,
As the sky bends over the earth with a kiss,
I wonder if such a witchery shed,

Deepens on Laura's cheek the red?
I wonder if then a whisper stirs
Those century-muffled lips of hers?
Or if you should turn to the pictured face,
Whether a start would show its trace,
Just as it will, if one intrude,
Surprising a lover's solitude?

v.

Well — this we know: She has need no more
To ask the question she asked of yore —
"*Art thou tired of loving me, Petrarch?*" Nay,
For here they are wedded in love so true,
That for centuries yet, as for centuries through,
Not even its shadow shall pass away.

THE BALLAD OF THE BELL-TOWER.

"Five years ago I vowed to Heaven upon my falchion-blade
To build the tower; and to this hour my vow hath not been paid.

"When from the eagle's nest I snatched my falcon-hearted dove,
And in my breast shaped her a nest, safe and warm-lined with love,

"Not all the bells in Christendom, if rung with fervent might,
That happy day in janglings gay had told my joy aright.

"As up the aisle my bride I led, in that triumphant hour,
I ached to hear some wedding-cheer clash from the minster tower.

"Nor chime nor tower the minster had; so in my soul I sware,
Come loss, come let, that I would set church-bells a-ringing there

"Before a twelvemonth. But ye know what forays lamed the land,
How seasons went, and wealth was spent, and all were weak of hand.

"And then the yearly harvest failed ('t was when my boy was born),
But could I build while vassals filled my ears with cries for corn?

"Thereafter happed the heaviest woe, and none could help or save;
Nor was there bell to toll a knell above my Hertha's grave.

"Ah, had I held my vow supreme all hinderance to control,
Maybe these woes — God knows! God knows! — had never crushed my soul.

"Even now ye beg that I give o'er: ye say the scant supply
Of water fails in lowland vales, and mountain-springs are dry.

"'Here be the quarried stones' (ye grant), 'skilled craftsmen come at call;
But with no more of water-store, how *can* we build the wall?'

"Nay, listen: Last year's vintage crowds our cellars, tun on tun:
With wealth of wine for yours and mine, dare the work go undone?

"Quick! bring them forth, these mighty butts: let none be elsewhere sold;
And I will pay this very day their utmost worth in gold,

"That so the mortar that cements each stone within the shrine,
For her dear sake whom God did take, may all be mixed with wine."

. . . . . .

'T was thus the baron built his tower; and, as the story tells,
A fragrance rare bewitched the air whene'er they rang the bells.

A merrier music tinkled down when harvest-days were long:
They seemed to chime at vintage-time a catch of vintage-song;

And when the vats were foamed with must, if any loitered near
The minster tower at vesper hour, above him he would hear

Tinglings as of subsiding thrills, athwart the purple gloom,
And every draught of air he quaffed, would taste of vine-yard bloom.

THE LAKE AMONG THE HILLS.

I.

I KNOW a lake among the hills,
Serene and bright and full and free;
Unfed by any mountain rills,
And with no outlet to the sea:
And yet I marvel if there be
Found anywhere through all the land,
So gold and jewel-rimmed a cup
As Nature with her Hebe hand,
Here brims, and, kneeling, offers up.

II.

Its molten surface gives the sky
Its softest sapphire beauty back;
And when the storm comes scudding by,
Dark with its might of thunder-wrack,
Although its blue be tinged with black,
The tempest has no power to dash
The creamy swell against the shore,

Nor with defiant onset lash
The ripple to a sullen roar.

III.

From secret sources stowed away
Beneath its own sweet water, flows
The unseen strength that day by day,
Keeps it in such supreme repose
As never shallow current shows.
Its edges flash with tenderest green
That lures from far the hungry herds,
And midst its stooping copse are seen
The nests of thousand brooding birds.

IV.

Oh, for a nature like the lake's
Agleam amid our summer hills!
That gives ungrudged its own, nor takes;
That ever keeps its calm, and stills
Its heart, self-centred even when ills
Impend, with drift of tempest foam
That wooes the weary, and above
All other, weaves a nested home
For every wandering wing of love!

THE ROYAL ABBESS.

In the abbey stall, with his vestments old
So ravelled and rent through stress of time,
The haughty Bishop, St. Ethelwood,
Sat waiting the vesper chime.

As he turned the page of his service-book,
Beside him he heard a soft, low tread,
And, ceasing his *Aves*, with a look
Of arrogant scorn, he said:

"Ah! Edith of Wilton! So, they tell,
Thou hast not heeded me; knowest thou
My staff is a mace that can compel
The stateliest head to bow?

"I have bidden thee once, and now again,
As thy ghostly father, I come to urge
That, putting aside thy royal train,
Thou clothe thee in simple serge.

"King Edgar's daughter although thou be,
I charge thee remember the Church allows
No choice for lofty or low degree
To such as assume her vows.

"And yet in thy hair the diamond glows,
Thy golden cross hath a chain of pearls;
And see! at thy throat a fresh-blown rose
As rare as a gay court-girl's.

"And, under thy veil of costly lace,
Is little, I ween, of penance done;
What right to heighten her beauty's grace
Belongs to a Wilton nun?

"*My* robe with its reaved and ragged fray,
And its knotted girdle of hempen string,
I would not give in exchange to-day
For the ermine that clothes the King!

The fair young Abbess had stood before
The priest as he spake, with lowly guise;
But there shone, when the sharp rebuke was o'er,
A fire in her saintly eyes.

"*God* gave me the beauty that thou dost bid
Me cowardly lessen, or meanly dim;
Nay! rather than under the rough serge hid,
I keep it supreme for *Him!*

"My father, the King, to the court still calls;
But even *his* summons have not sufficed
To lure away from her convent walls
The virgin espoused to Christ.

"And I for my holy service' sake,
As a daughter of princes, choose that He
Who winneth me from the world should take
My dowry along with me.

"He loved the lilies; He made them fair;
And sweet as the sweetest incense flows
The stream of its fragrance when I wear
For Him, on my heart, a rose.

"And, Father, I doubt not, there may hide
Beneath the tatters thou bidst me view,
As much of arrogance, scorn, and pride
As ever the ermine knew!"

THE BISHOP'S EPITAPH.

AT MONTE FIASCONE.

I.

Come out of the dim old church, I say,
Dismal with dust, and chilly cold,
And dank with hundreds of years of mould;
Come out to the fresh, crisp morn of May,
And taste how the odorous breezes take
A delicate quality from the Lake
Of Bolsena, lying yonder, fair
As a sapphire setting this ancient ring
Of golden, Etruscan hills, that fling
Their circles around us everywhere;
Then, I will answer your questioning.

II.

— You never have heard the story? — know
Nothing about this Bishop, who

Here has been sleeping some centuries through,
Under yon battered tomb — nor why
His marble effigy there should lie
Flanked, as you see, by flasks instead
Of the cross, on either side of his head,
With the strange inscription, "*Est — Est — Est!*
Legible still beneath his breast?

III.

Not forsooth, that there 's much to tell —
Only I 've read the chronicle
Kept in the convent near, — and learned
The curious way the prelate earned
Such symbols. It seems this Bishop Johann,
In his way was a famous sort of man;
Not for his churchmanship — a thing
He did not concern himself about;
Credo and *Ave* and *Pater* no doubt
Coming by nature, as blue-birds sing;
Nor for his alm-deeds daily wrought,
Nor for his holy lessons taught,
Nor for his virtues great or small,
Nor for his saintly life at all;
But he loved one thing — over, above

All that there is on earth to love,
— Wine that was fit for an emperor;
And that was all he was famous for!

IV.

The season for him was only fine
Just as it ripened the laden vine;
The flush of the richest sunset skies
Was only suggestive of the dyes
Of his favorite clusters, amber, gold;
All Nature was but a cup to hold
The mystic mingling of sun and dew,
That fired the globules through and through.
He knew the secret of every cell —
Where slowly mellowed the mossy casks —
And not on his rosary could he tell
His beads, as he told the cobwebbed flasks —
Opened on such and such Saint's Day,
And fragrant a score of leagues away.

V.

And as he searched in other lands
For the oldest and richest and rarest brands,
It happened he heard of wines whose fame

He never had even known by name.
He summoned his steward: "Go" — he said,
"And wheresoever you chance to find
Some vintage of racier, riper kind,
Then secretly chalk on the barrel's head
Under the cobwebs somewhere, '*Est*' —
Saying no word of purchase, lest,
Knowing my faultless judgment, thrice
Its worth the rogues may demand in price,
When I send to fetch the casks away, —
Which even a Bishop is loath to pay."

VI.

From many a vault the steward drew
Full tankards: but only here and there,
As he haunted the cellars through and through,
Did he find a cask he deemed might bear
The Bishop's mark. But he came, one night,
To Montè Fiasconè — the height
Covered with vineyards yonder. When
He had finished a goblet of its wine,
He secretly chalked the covert sign,
And gave them the vessel to brim again,
And draining it, wrote the second word,

And gulping once more, he scored the third
On the bearded cask-head, *Est — Est — Est!*
(The Bishop would know) Good — Better — Best!

VII.

Behind his steward three days or more
Followed the Bishop. Eagerly
He came to Montè Fiasconè —
For he heard on the way that its wine was rare,
Nor paused till his rein was slackened there.
He sought the cellars; and chuckled o'er
The thrice scored word, with a huge delight;
He tasted and tippled all the day,
He drank and he guzzled all the night,
Till his vital power was worn away;
And just as the socket spark seemed fled,
He lifted a feeble hand and said
To the monks around him, "A purse of gold
I give to your convent here, and ask
That year by year ye will spill a cask
Of your gracious wine upon my grave —
That so it may trickle down, and lave
My mouldering body; and carve above
As my epitaph, the word I love

For its fragrant memories, *Est — Est — Est!*'
Kind brothers you have my last request!"

VIII.

I've answered your question. Now you know
What sort of a Bishop sleeps below,
And why the old monks fulfilled their task
By carving instead of a cross, a flask
Each side of his head — Do you need to ask?

MAID CICELY'S STEEPLE CAP.

A. D. 1480.

I, CONNING my missal, o'erheard to-day,
At matins, the Lady Abbess say
That Thomas the Friar, who hath an eye
For matters that go in the realm awry,
Like Peter the Hermit, comes to aid
King Edward by preaching a new crusade,
And findeth the secret of all mishaps
Bound up in the women's steeple caps!

She said that he preached in London Town,
And took as his text, "Top not come down;"
— Plain language as ever the dear Lord spake —
And he vouched if the women failed to take
These spires from off their heads and tear
The kerchiefs away that dangle there,
St. Peter, who keepeth the golden keys
Of heaven, on seeing such caps as these,

Would shut of a surety the door and cry,
"The gateway is low, and the coif is high:
Begone with the beetling badge of sin,
Or not one woman shall enter in!"

He frightened them so that straight they tore
Their caps right off on the abbey floor,
And fired them there. (I dare suppose
The fume was sweet to the Friar's nose!)

"Maid Cicely!" Quick as quick could be,
I turned when the Abbess spake to me —
"Thou wearest a steeple cap, I ween,
As high as the highest that I have seen;
And the silken veil about it wound
Trails over thy kirtle to the ground.
Such towers, my daughter, proud and tall,
May tumble as did Siloam's wall:
Take heed! Thou knowest Saint Luke doth tell,
How on the eighteen, that tower fell
And slew them" —

— "Gramercy," quoth I then,
"But good my mother — they all were men!

And none had been slain, I trow, at all,
Had only the tower refused to fall!"

"Yet had it been meant that thou shouldst be
An ell-breadth higher — dost thou not see
That God would have made thee so?" — "Nay, nay,"
I answered sharp, "that 's not God's way:
Whatever we can — 't is, certes, true —
Accomplish, He leaveth for us to do.

"He meant that the monk be shaven bare?
Then why did he clothe his head with hair?
— He meant that thy nuns should shear away
Their beautiful locks? — Then, wherefore, pray
Did he make them grow? — So, mother mine,
Unless thou provest by word and line
Of missal, or even Evangelist,
That Scripture hath banned it, I will twist
The kerchief about my steeple cap;
And the monk shall know that it takes a rap
Of something more than a shaven crown
To tumble a maiden's top-knot down!"

THE WANDERER'S BELL.

THE Baron's daughter would ride abroad,
Though skies grew fleecy, as waned the day;
But what did she care for the thickening air,
When she thought of her villagers far away?

They needed the healing draught her hand
Was pledged to carry ere set of sun:
And she would be back on the homeward track
Before she should see the storm begun.

"I never could lose myself," she said;
"Or if I should chance astray to roam,
My Balther would know through swaths of snow
The safest and surest pathway home."

So she flung the rein on her palfrey's neck,
And hummed in his ear her chirrup-tune,
And cantered amain across the plain,
Nor heeded the gray of the afternoon.

But when, with her sacred mission done
(For they held her long with their tales of woe),
She mounted, the wold was white and cold,
And the path was hidden by swirls of snow.

The pines stretched dusky and dim before,
And madly aloft their great arms tossed;
But she chirruped her cheer without a fear
That Balther could be misled or lost.

Yet wilder and fiercer roared the blast,
And blindingly beat in Gerta's face,
Until she was fain in Balther's mane
To cover her mouth for breathing-space.

Still into the forest's sheeted maze,
As trackless now as the surge of seas,
Plunged Balther, although the wreaths of snow
At each step buried him to the knees.

Far into the night they struggled on,
Till, breathless and spent and sore afraid,
With her rein loose flung, fast Gerta clung
To the neck of her panting steed, and prayed:

"Oh, save me, Father, for Christ's dear sake!"
And scarce had she uttered aloud the word
When she felt that an ear was pricked to hear
Some sound that her own not yet had heard.

With a forward bound through the swamping drifts
Sprang Balther. Who Gerta's joy could tell
As she caught through the white, blind rifts of night
The distant peal of a chapel-bell?

The good Knight Waldemar vowed a vow,
For his daughter rescued, that nevermore
Should any who crossed the wold be lost
For lack of a guide to the convent-door.

And that is the reason that when the hand
Of the clock in the tower at ten appears,
The bell on yon height rings every night,
And has done it for over three hundred years.

BEFORE DEATH.

I.

How much would I care for it, could I know,
That when I am under the grass or snow,
The ravelled garment of life's brief day
Folded, and quietly laid away;
The spirit let loose from mortal bars,
And somewhere away among the stars:
How much do you think it would matter then
What praise was lavished upon me, when,
Whatever might be its stint or store,
It neither could help nor harm me more?

II.

If midst of my toil, they had but thought
To stretch a finger, I would have caught
Gladly such aid, to bear me through
Some bitter duty I had to do:
And when it was done, had I but heard

One breath of applause, one cheering word —
One cry of "*Courage!*" amid the strife,
So weighted for me, with death or life —
How would it have nerved my soul to strain
Through the whirl of the coming surge again!

III.

What use for the rope, if it be not flung
Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?
What help in a comrade's bugle-blast
When the peril of Alpine heights is past?
What need that the spurring pæan roll
When the runner is safe beyond the goal?
What worth is eulogy's blandest breath
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death?
No! no! if you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it, while I am alive to hear!

A NOVEMBER NOCTURNE.

The autumn air sweeps faint and chill
Across the maple-crested hill;
And on my ear
Falls, tingling clear,
A strange, mysterious, woodland thrill.

From utmost twig, from scarlet crown
Untouched with yet a tinct of brown,
Reluctant, slow,
As loath to go,
The loosened leaves come wavering down;

And not a hectic trembler there,
In its decadence, doomed to share
The fate of all, —
But in its fall,
Flings something sob-like, on the air.

No drift or dream of passing bell,
Dying afar in twilight dell,
Hath any heard,
Whose chimes have stirred
More yearning pathos of farewell.

A silent shiver, as of pain,
Goes quivering through each sapless vein ;
And there are moans,
Whose undertones
Are sad as midnight autumn-rain.

Ah, if without its dirge-like sigh,
No lightest-clinging leaf can die, —
Let him who saith
Decay and death
Should bring no heart-break, tell me why.

Each graveyard gives the answer : There
I read *Resurgam* everywhere :
— So easy said
Above the dead —
So weak to anodyne despair !

AUTUMN LOVE.

A WIFE'S LETTER.

DEAR Heart! You ask if time has changed
The love of long ago;
If summer's flush of love is past —
The love we cherished so;
Because with hand in hand we walk
Together in the snow.

We cannot turn life's seasons back,
However much we grieve
That summer's solstice days are gone —
We cannot once deceive
These hearts, so versed in love's true lore,
With any make-believe.

And now October's deepening glint
Goldens the season o'er;
The perfect fruit is on the stem,

The kernel at the core ;
We 've gathered in our harvest-graith,
What can we wish for more ?

The roses pearled with fancy's dew
No longer meet our glance ;
The lily stalks of sentiment
We look at half-askance,
And smile, perhaps, to think they once
Were fragrant with romance.

Content us so ! We own the change ;
We know the splendid hours
Have gone with all their drifts of cloud
And gusts of rainbow showers ;
And love has had its summer-time
For these twain hearts of ours.

And yet love's lucid atmosphere
Hath known no clearer shine :
The birds that linger never sang
With trills — if few — so fine ;
The starlight, as we walk beneath,
Seemed never more divine.

And as my heart in curtained hush
Sits wrapped in dreamy bliss
Beside our Lares-fire, and feels
The warmth of clasp and kiss —
I wonder if our summer love
Were half so sweet as this!

THE FLEMISH BELLS.

[THE bells cast by the famous moulder, Van den Gheyn, of Louvain, are said now to have lost all the sweetness which they had a hundred years ago.]

SADLY he shook his frosted head,
Listening and leaning on his cane;
"Nay — I am like the bells," he said,
Cast by the moulder of Louvain.

"Often you 've read of their mystic powers,
Floating o'er Flanders' dull lagoons;
How they would hold the lazy hours
Meshed in a net of golden tunes.

"Never such bells as those were heard
Echoing over the sluggish tide;
Now like a storm crash — now like a bird,
Flinging their carillons far and wide.

"There in Louvain they swing to-day,
Up in the turrets where long they 've swung;
But the rare cunning of yore they say,
Somehow has dropped from the brazen tongue.

"Over them shines the same pale sky,
Under them stretch the same lagoons;
Out from the belfries, bird-like fly,
As from a nest, the same sweet tunes:

"Ever the same — and yet we know
None are entranced, these later times,
Just as the listeners long ago
Were, with the wonder of their chimes.

"Something elusive as viewless air,
Something we cannot understand,
Strangely has vanished out of the rare
Skill of the moulder's master-hand.

"So — when you plead that life is still
Full, as of old, with tingling joy —
That I may hear its music thrill,
Just as I heard it when a boy;

"All I can say is — Youth has passed —
Master of magic falls and swells —
Bearing away the cunning cast
Into the moulding of the bells!"

NUNC DIMITTIS.

What a good world and fair,
And excellently lovely! If there be
Among the myriad spheres of upper air,
One yet more beautiful, some other where,
It matters not to me.

What can I crave of good
That here I find not? Nature's stores are spread
Abroad with such profusion, that I would
Not have one glory added, if I could,
Beneath or overhead.

And I have loved right well
The world God gave us to be happy in;
A world — may be — without a parallel
Below that Heaven of Heavens, where doth not dwell
The discontent of sin.

And yet though I behold
Its matchless splendors stretched on every side, —

Its sapphire seas, its hills, its sunset gold,
Its leafage, fresh as Eden's was of old, —
I am not satisfied.

Dark, blurring shadows fall
On everything; a strange confusion reigns;
The whole creation travaileth, and, through all,
I hear the same sad murmur that Saint Paul
Heard, sitting in his chains.

Where'er I look abroad,
What blight I see! What pain, and sin, and woe!
What taint of death beneath the greenest sod!
Until I shudder, questioning how God
Can bear to have it so!

I marvel that His love
Is not out-worn; I wonder that He hath
A plenitude of patience, so above
Finite conception, that it still can prove
A stay upon His wrath.

And then, — because I tire
Of self, and of this poor humanity, —

Because I grovel where I should aspire,
And wail my thwarted hope and balked desire,
With such small faith to see,

That yet, o'er all this ill,
God's final good shall triumph, when the sum
Is reckoned up; that even, if I will,
I, at the least, in mine own bosom still
May see His kingdom come, —

Because of this, I say,
I pine for that pure realm where turmoils cease,
Sighing (more tired of *them* than day by day
Heart-broken after Heaven!) "*Lord, let, I pray,*
Thy servant go in peace!"

THE FAIRIES' TABLE-CLOTH.

HERE is the fairies' table, vined
  Over with lichened buhl-work bright:
Here is the cloth they left behind
  After their feast was done last night.

Never such napery met my eyes;
  Never such cobweb woof I 've found,
Dotted with dew-drops damask-wise,
  Bordered with seed-pearl all around.

Service of creamiest lily ware,
  Spoons of gold from the tulip's heart;
Silver *épergnes* of callas rare,
  Napkins fringed by the gentian's art.

Wine from the spice-wood's vintage poured,
  Out of the bubble's Venice glass;
Bread from the pollen of wild-peas stored;
  Cates from the buds of sassafras.

Meats from the hazels; sweets and sours,
Fashioned alone for fairy lips,
Out of the cores of pungent flowers,
Out of the purple haws and hips.

Fruits from the winter-green, alder, grape;
Barberries red with ruby glows;
Wildings of elfin size and shape,
Folded in leaves of brier-rose.

Satiny toad-stools ranged as chairs;
Moon mid-sky for a chandelier;
Crickets and tree-frogs droning airs,
Up in the green orchestra near.

Ah, what a supper it must have been!
Bountiful, zested, racy, rare;
Ah, if I only had fairy kin!
Ah, if I only had been there!

THE KISS OF WORSHIP.

I.

THEY tell us of a race
In far-off lands,
Who, in old pagan days,
Would kiss their hands
And fling upon the air
Their homage, so
That round them everywhere
The gods might know
How, in the symbols spread
Before their eyes,
Beneath and overhead,
In seas and skies;
Behind each natural law
They felt the sign,
And, owned in all they saw
The touch divine.

And, lest through oversight,
Some power should miss
The reverence deemed his right,
They flung their kiss
Of worship on the wind,
Thus to be blown
Where'er its wings could find
For gods a throne.

II.

We of a later race,
Who walk on heights
That front the dwelling-place
Of Him who lights
With floods of radiancy
Our paths, each one, —
Till, like the angel, we
Stand in the sun, —
Do we, with lifted hands
And loyal mouth,
Thus over seas and lands —
East, west, north, south —
Fling worship on the track
Of winds abroad,

Till all around comes back
The echo "*God*"?
And lest we chance to fail
In full acclaim
Of attributes that veil
The holiest Name;
Do *we* send Love, whose wing
No space debars,
Beyond the luminous ring
Of outmost stars,
To drop with breathless bliss
Of homage sweet
Faith's wide-flung, rapturous kiss
About His feet?

AT LAST.

Written by request for the Ovation held in honor of Edgar Allan Poe, in the New York Academy of Music.

If he were here to-night — the strange rare poet,
Whose sphinx-like face no jestings could beguile —
To meet the award at last, and feel and know it
Securely his — how grand would be his smile!

How would the waves of wordless grief, that over
His haughty soul had swept through surging years,
Sink to a mystic calm, till he would cover
His proud pale face to hide the happy tears!

Who knows the secret of that strange existence —
That world within a world — how far, how near;
Like thought for closeness, like a star for distance —
Who knows? The conscious essence may be here.

If from its viewless bounds the soul has power
To free itself for some ethereal flight,

How strange to think the compensating hour
For all the tragic past, may be to-night!

To feel that, where the galling scoffs and curses
Of Fate fell heaviest on his blasted track,
There, Fame herself the spite of Fate reverses —
Might almost win the restless spirit back.

Though the stern Tuscan, exiled, desolated,
Lies mid Ravenna's marshes far away,
At Santa Croce, still his stone is fêted,
And Florence piles her violets there to-day!

Though broken-hearted the sad singer perished,
With woe outworn, amid the convent's gloom,
Yet how pathetic are the memories cherished,
When Rome keeps Tasso's birthday at his tomb!

So, though our poet sank beneath life's burden,
Benumbed and reckless through the crush of fate;
And though, as comes so oft, the yearned-for guerdon,
No longer yearned for, since it comes too late:

He is avenged to-night! No blur is shrouding
The flame his genius feeds: the wise, and brave,
And good, and young, and beautiful are crowding
Around, to scatter heart's-ease o'er his grave!

And his Virginia, like a tender mother
Who breathes above her errant boy no blame,
Stoops now to kiss his pallid lips, and smother
In pride her sorrow, as she names his name.

— Could he have only seen in vatic vision
The gorgeous pageant present to our eyes,
His soul had known one glimpse of joy elysian!
— Can we call no man happy till he dies?

A BELLE OF PRÆNESTE.

CASTELLANI COLLECTION OF ANTIQUES.

I.

HERE is her toilet-case — a crust
O'er it of greenest classic rust;
Still with the delicate twist and twine
Visible of the rare design;
Even the very casket where,
  Nearly three thousand years ago,
One who was young and fresh and fair —
  Fair as the fairest that you know —
Hoarded her maiden treasures. See,
Here is the mirror that used to be
Able to flash with silvery grace
Back the divinity of her face;
This is the comb — its carvings yet
Perfect — that knotted her braids of jet;
There 's the cicada for her brow;
Arrows whose points are blunted now;
  Coils for her throat; an unguent pot

(Proof of some moulder's wondrous skill),
Ivory tablet with a blot
Showing a tint of the carmine still.

II.

This was her necklace: even as I
Toy with its links of threaded gold,
She may have toyed, with pensive sigh,
Dropping them through her fingers, while
Hearing, perhaps, with blushing smile,
Under the limes, some lover bold
Telling a tale that 's never old.
Here is the fibula that lay
Over her heart for many a day,
Throbbing what time that lover won
Wreaths when Etruscan games were done;
Quivering under the anguished strain
When he was borne from battle, slain;
Rising and falling with her breath,
Warming with life or chilled with death!

III.

She — has she vanished who seems so near,
Drawn by this ancient *cista* here? —

Faded, as faded those sunset dyes
Into the infinite, awful skies?
Passed, as the wind passed over the grain
Headed to ripeness on the plain
Girdling Præneste? Did she so
Perish, these centuried years ago,
Leaving this only trace, whose rust
Even may mock her scattered dust?
Can you believe this streak of red
Lives, while her subtle soul is dead?
Do the cicada's wings infold
Essence her spirit could not hold?
Dare you avouch this bronze can be
Something immortal more than she?

IV.

Why do I ask? Somewhere, somewhere,
Shrouded in boundless depths of air
Nearer than we conceive, or far
Out of the reach of sun or star,
Vital and sentient, mind, heart, will,
Waits this belle of Præneste still,
Conscious as when in the flesh below,
Nearly three thousand years ago —
Waits — and for what? Ah, God doth know!

THE LONGSHOREMAN'S VIEW OF IT.

What did he do? Oh, nothing much;
Standing upon the bluff one day,
Suddenly, ere his hand could clutch
Even his dress, the boy, I say,
Whom he was watching, as he threw
Yonder his tackle over the height,
Toppled headforemost into the blue
Wash of the sea, and was swept from sight.

Yonder just where the breakers churn
Madly their crested caps to snow,
Where you can see the shelving turn
Sharp towards the jutting crag below;
That 's where he sank: No faintest chance
Even to venture a hope upon:
Had he but waited for one brief glance,
He would have known it — the boy was gone.

Noble? Yes — think how he rushed on death,
Sprang to the spot with one wild leap,

Plunged, without pausing to draw a breath,
Into the jaws of the boiling deep,
Right where the breakers, hurrying fast
Over each other with blinding spray,
Tumbled and scattered in surges vast,
Just as you see them do to-day.

What were a couple of lives to them?
Little as yonder swirling chips, —
They with their rush no might can stem,
Ready to swallow a hundred ships.
Father or brother? Nay, not he!
Only a stranger, some one said;
The greater the pity, it seems to me,
Being no other, — since he is dead.

Ah, thank Heaven! you say, that still
Heroes like this among our clods
Lift and exalt our nature till
Grandly it stretches up to God's.
Well, I am one of the common brand,
Such as may everywhere be found:
Yes, — the example may thrill the land,
But — can it help the man who's drowned?

THE WINE-VAULTS OF BERGENSTEIN.

A GERMAN LEGEND.

Old Heinrich sat at the hostel door,
And counted the gains of the market o'er,
That never had seemed so small before.

"How Gretchen will scold! But then the beer
Has heartened me up with its kindly cheer: —
Boy, bring me another tankard here!"

The tankard was drained, and he homeward went
With a stagger of stolid, dull content,
Though Gretchen *should* know that his gains were spent.

But scarce had he shambled one half his way,
When, as it was nearing the close of day,
A voice at his elbow seemed to say, —

"Ah! here are the ruins of Bergenstein,
So famous, 't was said in the days lang syne,
For vintages of a wondrous wine.

"For such, of a truth, were nowhere known
As mellowed beneath the piles of stone,
In tuns with their cobwebbed beards o'ergrown.

"The lords of the castle, although they were
Right ancient barons, with scutcheons fair,
Held shamefully riotous revels there.

"They drank in the morning, they drank at night,
They wasted their lives in brawl and fight;
And the castle it crumbled, as well it might.

"Yet steadily, under it all, the vine
Kept bearing, beneath the rain and shine;
And still in the vaults they stored the wine.

"'Twas over two hundred years ago
When all that I tell you happened so;
For I was the cooper — and I should know.

" The last of the Bergen knights was he
Who flung, as he came to die, the key
Of the vaults, with an angry glare at me,

" And said, — 'It has slain us one by one;
Go turn the spigot of every tun,
And let the wine that has cursed us run.'

" I flew to obey, in hottest haste,
But, stopping to take one golden taste,
I had not the heart to see the waste;

" And, lifting my eyes, I could but say, —
'God keep his perilous gifts, I pray,
Safe till the Millennium! When that day

" 'Shall dawn on a world new-made again,
Such draughts shall be harmless unto men
Grown like to the angels, but — not *till* then!'

" My prayer had its answer, — year by year
I visit the vaults, and linger near
To see that no trace of the tuns appear.

"And as soon as the blossoms scent the vine,
The crones declare 't is a certain sign
That the cooper has come to taste his wine.

"Poor fool! as you listen to what I 've told
Of the tuns, you would barter a bag of gold
To see them, and stroke their beards of mould."

"And toss off a tankard," old Heinrich said,
And turned him about and rubbed his head,
But — cooper, and castle, and all had fled!

And there in the roadside ditch he lay,
And puzzled his brains till break of day,
And wondered what Gretchen would have to say.

PRITCHARD THE ENGINEER.

I.

RIGHT on the track of the flying train
Lay the huge bowlder. Quick as thought,
Grasping the throttle with a strain
Tightened and terrible, Pritchard caught
Hold of the brake-bar. On its way,
Crashing to headlong ruin, rushed
Madly the engine, till it lay
Hurled on the bowlder, wrecked and crushed.

II.

Smitten with horror, pale with fear,
Hastened the anxious crowd to see
Whether the faithful engineer
(Braver or better none than he)
Breathed, as he stood there with his face
Grand in its steadfast purpose set,
Showing the ordeal's awful trace
Stamped on the rigid features yet.

III.

What did they find? One hand a-strain,
Grasping the throttle with a clutch
Closer than death's, and one in vain
Clinching the brake-valve bar with such
Spasm of grip they could undo
Only with wrench of strength applied;
Seeing the bolt that pierced him through,
Failed to unclasp it — so he died:

IV.

Died at his post, as a brave man should,
Shirking no duty, danger, strife;
True to his trust, although it would
Cost him — he saw it so — his life.
These are the heroes, noblest far, —
Men who can meet without a fear
Death, with their hands upon the bar,
Even as Pritchard the engineer!

COMPENSATION.

Because the page of saint and sage
Is closed before your burdened eyes;
Because the thought by genius wrought
Forbidden to your vision lies;

Because the fine, ecstatic line
The poet writes is shut away;
Because you glance at no romance,
Nor sweep the world-news of the day; —

Must you sit by with murmurous sigh,
And hopeless sadness in your looks;
As if the best of life's true zest
Were bound within the realms of books?

Lift up, I pray, this golden day,
That vision which the classic line
Has dimmed with pain of overstrain,
And own there 's something more divine

Upon the broad expanse which God
Sets clear before your spirit's reach,
Freighted with more exalted lore
Than human tongue could ever teach.

Your pen can trace no faintest grace
Of fancy such as throbs and stirs
In living light along the bright
Record of Nature's characters.

No wisest sage, no scholar's page,
No secrets, Science may descry,
Can teach the heart a thousandth part
As much as God's great, open sky.

And tell me where are poets rare
As lyric birds that thrill and throng
The solitudes of breezy woods
Just for the very love of song!

What gay romance can weave a dance
As airy as the butterfly's?
What drama's dream can ever seem
Tragic as that in human eyes?

God's way is best. If He has pressed
His hand above your eyelids so,
Be sure, therefore, he has some lore
To teach you that you do not know.

Hold the dear hand, and understand,
While covering it with kisses true,
That you must lay all else away
Till you have heard His teachings through.

A Father's care should surely wear
No semblance even of love's eclipse,
If down he lays the book and says,
"*Child, learn your lesson from my lips.*"

ARAB WIT.

In a green oasis where gurgling ran
The sedge-choked waters, a caravan
Paused, marching to Ispahan.

And, calm as the Oman when the roar
Of surging breakers along its shore
Sinks as the storm is o'er, —

On his Yemen cloth the Emir lay;
For many had been the fearful fray
Since thither he tracked his way.

His pitiless hand had wide and far
Traced, with the sweep of his scimitar,
A circle of scathe and scar.

And now, with his works of vengeance done,
Tranquil he prayed at set of sun,
"Allah, the Faith hath won."

"Who sayeth it?" rang a fierce demand;
For, scouring o'er the soundless sand,
An Arab leaped, close at hand.

"Pray, how hath he won? By thousands slain,
This Emir, whose rule is scourge and bane:
No Tigris could wash *his* stain!"

"By Allah!" the Emir scowled, — his brow
Pallid with fury — "knowest thou
That Emir am I? And now

"Thy life for thy slander's cost!"
"Nay, nay!"
The Arab laughed, in a jeering way;
"Who questions thy right, I pray?

"Thou hast told thy rank — hear *mine:* I am
Of the powerful race of the Yezidan,
Whose reason is cool and calm

"Save at full-moon; and then some blight —
Ha! ha! — makes fools of us all outright;
And — the moon is full to-night!"

The blade slid back to its jewelled head,
As, waving his hand, the Emir said,
"Give to the fool some bread."

CALLING THE ANGELS IN.

We mean to do it. Some day, some day,
We mean to slacken this fevered rush
That is wearing our very souls away;
And grant to our hearts a hush
That is only enough to let them hear
The footsteps of angels drawing near.

We mean to do it. Oh, never doubt,
When the burden of daytime broil is o'er,
We 'll sit and muse while the stars come out,
As the patriarchs sat at the door
Of their tents with a heavenward-gazing eye,
To watch for the angels passing by.

We 've seen them afar at high noontide,
When fiercely the world's hot flashings beat;
Yet never have bidden them turn aside,
And tarry in converse sweet;

Nor prayed them to hallow the cheer we spread,
To drink of our wine and break our bread.

We promise our hearts that when the stress
  Of the life-work reaches the longed-for close,
When the weight that we groan with hinders less,
  We 'll welcome such calm repose
As banishes care's disturbing din,
And then — we 'll call the angels in.

The day that we dreamed of comes at length,
  When, tired of every mocking quest,
And broken in spirit and shorn of strength,
  We drop at the door of rest,
And wait and watch as the day wanes on —
But — the angels we meant to call, are gone!

PERSEPHONE.

Listen! What a sudden rustle
Fills the air!
All the birds are in a bustle
Everywhere.
Such a ceaseless hum and twitter
Overhead!
Such a flash of wings that glitter,
Wide outspread!
Far away I hear a drumming —
Tap, tap, tap!
Can the woodpecker be coming
After sap?
Butterflies are hovering over
(Swarms on swarms)
Yonder meadow-patch of clover,
Like snowstorms.
Through the vibrant air a tingle
Buzzingly

Throbs, and o'er me sails a single
Bumble-bee.
Lissome swayings make the willows
One bright sheen,
Which the breeze puffs out in billows
Foamy green.
From the marshy brook that 's smoking
In the fog,
I can catch the crool and croaking
Of a frog.
Dogwood-stars the slopes are studding,
And I see
Blooms upon the purple-budding
Judas-tree.
Aspen-tassels thick are dropping
All about,
And the alder-leaves are cropping
Broader out;
Mouse-ear tufts the hawthorn sprinkle,
Edged with rose;
The dark bed of periwinkle
Fresher grows.
Up and down are midges dancing
On the grass;

How their gauzy wings are glancing
As they pass!
What does all this haste and hurry
Mean, I pray —
All this out-door flush and flurry
Seen to-day?
This presaging stir and humming,
Chirp and cheer
Mean? It means that Spring is coming:
Spring is here!

THE KEPT PROMISE.

In the Moslem city of Khorassàn,
Adjudging the people from his divan,
Sat Omar the pitiless, haughty Khan.

He had sentenced assassin, knave, and thief,
And he called to his guard with order brief:
"Now bring to me hither the Vizier Chief,

"Who dared to defy my bidding. He
Who let from his camp my foe go free,
Because he had shared his salt, shall see

"That the man who can break his promise, led
By a fancied duty, nor risk instead
Life rather than do it, must lose his head."

The Vizier was summoned. With hurried words
He told how a chief of the hostile Kurds,
Who seemed but a shepherd of flocks and herds,

Had come to his tent, his eyeballs dim
Through hunger, and gaunt in every limb; —
"What could I, but break my bread with him?"

The face of the Khan grew wroth; his eye
Flashed fire; he deigned but curt reply:
"The soldier who breaks his word must die!"

No pallor the Vizier's cheek o'erspread;
On his bosom he only dropped his head:
"It is Fate, — it is Fate!" he grimly said.

"I am ready, O master, to meet the worst,
But not till your kindness grants me first
A vessel of water to quench my thirst:

"Shall the scimitar stay till I drink?" Quick o'er
The forehead of Omar, so harsh before,
Dawned something like pity: "*Till* then: no more!"

The water was brought. The Vizier's brow
Shone brighter: "We all of us heard you vow,
'*Till* then.' Your promise is pledged me now!"

Then he dashed on the ground the goblet! "So
You have snared me, knave!" said the Khan. "But,
no —
I never will break a promise. Go!"

A TOUCH OF FROST.

Only a word it was — a word
Freighted with sweetness to the core,
Even for both of them spoken and heard
Thousands of times before.

What was the matter with it now,
That it should seem to throw a blight
Over the flushing cheek and brow,
Turned to the sudden light?

Was not the innocent word the same
That, in her days of bridal bliss,
Oft he had wreathed about her name,
Crowning it with a kiss?

Yet what a difference! Crisp and curt,
Piercing the sensitive soul, it drew
Blood from her heart-life, till the hurt
Harrowed her through and through.

He — did he mean to wound her so,
Whom he had loved through all the years,
Letting her from his presence go
Blind with her pent-up tears?

Never! Does Nature mean to kill
Blossoms she cherishes at such cost,
When o'er her dews she drops a chill
Turning them all to frost?

Can she be conscious that on some night,
Frostier, keener, and colder far
Than is her wont, she breathes a blight?
No — *but the roses are!*

THE FIRST TE DEUM.

'T was Easter night in Milan ; and before
The altar in the great Basilica,
St. Ambrose stood. At the baptismal font
Kneeled a young neophyte, his brow still wet
With the symbolic water, and near by
The holy Monica, her raised eyes strained,
As with unearthly ecstasy she breathed
Her *Nunc Dimittis, Domine.* The words
Of comfort spoken — " Be sure the child for whom
Thy mother-heart hath poured so many prayers
Shall not be lost " — had full accomplishment,
And her tired heart found peace.

St. Ambrose raised
His hands to heaven, and on his face there shone
Such light as glorified the Prophet's, when
An angel from the altar bare a coal
And touched his lips. With solemn step and slow,
He turned to meet Augustine, as he rose

Up from the pavement; and thereon he brake
Forth in ascriptive chant:
"We praise Thee, God,
And we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord!"
Augustine, on the instant, caught the tone
Of answering exultation:
"All the earth
Doth worship Thee, the Father Everlasting!"
And from the altar-rail came back again
The antiphony:
"To Thee all angels cry
Aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein."
And from the font,
"To Thee the cherubim
And seraphim continually do cry,
Oh, Holy, Holy, Holy, Thou Lord God
Of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of all
The glory of Thy Majesty!"
And then,
With upward gaze, as if he looked upon
The infinite multitude about the throne,
St. Ambrose uttered with triumphant voice,
"The glorious company of the Apostles" —
"Praise Thee" — burst reverent from Augustine's lips;

"The goodly fellowship of all the Prophets" —
"Praise Thee:" "The noble army of the Martyrs" —
"Praise Thee!"

Thus back and forth responsive rolled
The grand antiphonal, until the crowd
That kneeled throughout the vast Basilica,
Rose to their feet, and toward the altar pressed,
With one strong impulse drawn! The breath of God
Had to their thought inspired these mortal tongues
To which they listened, as beneath a spell
Vatic and wonderful.

And when the last
Response was reached, and the rapt speakers stood
With eyelids closed, as those who had seen God,
And could not brook at once a mortal face,
Awestruck, the people bowed their heads and wept,
Then uttered with acclaim, one long — *Amen!*

THE CHRIST-CROTCH.[1]

A. D. 12—.

A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS BALLAD.

'T WAS the time of the old Crusaders:
And back with his broken band
The Lord of a Saxon castle
Had come from the Holy Land.

He was weary of wars and sieges,
And it sickened his soul to roam
So far from his wife and children,
So long from his English home.

And yet with a noble courage
He was proud for the Faith to fight;
For he carried upon his shoulder
The sign of the Red-Cross Knight.

[1] Christ-Crotch or Christ-Cradle — the old Saxon name for Mince-Pie.

It was Christmas-Eve at the castle,
The yule-log burnt in the hall,
And helmet and shield and banner
Threw shadows upon the wall.

And the Baron was telling stories
To the children about his knees,
Of some of the holy places
He had visited over seas.

He talked of the watching shepherds,
Of the wonderful, mystic sights,
Of the song that the angels chanted
That first of the Christmas-Nights:

He told of the star whose shining
Out-sparkled the brightest gem,
He told of the hallowed cradle
They showed him at Bethlehem.

And the eyes of the children glistened
To think that a rock sufficed,
With nothing but straw for blankets,
To cradle the Baby-Christ.

"Nay! quiet your sobbings, sweetest,"
Right gayly the Baron cried —
"For nothing but smiles must greet me,
This blessedest Christmas-Tide.

"Come, wife! I have thought of a cradle
Which thou, with the skill I praise,
Shalt mould with thy dainty fingers,
To honor this day of days!

"So lest we forget the manger,
Choose out of thy platters fair,
The one that is largest, deepest,
And line it with deftest care,

"With flakes of the richest pastry,
Wrought cunningly by thy hands,
That thus it may bring before us
The thought of the swaddling-bands.

"And out of thy well-stored larder,
Set forth of thy very best:
Is aught that we have too precious
To grant to this Christmas Guest?

"Strew meats of the finest shredding,
(The litter was chopped in the stall;)
Let butter and wine and honey
Be lavished above them all.

"Let raisins and figs from Smyrna
That draw to the East our thought,
With Araby's pungent spices,
Just such as the Magi brought;

"And syrups and tincts be mingled
With fruits from the Southern sea,
And given ungrudged; remember
He gave of his best for thee!

"Then over the noble platter,
A cover of pastry draw,
A star in its midst, as a token
Of that which the Sages saw.

"*Christ's Cradle!* — for so we 'll call it;
And ever, sweetheart, I pray,
With such thou wilt make us merry
At dinner each Christmas-Day!"

THE BEGGING CUPID.

A PIECE OF SCULPTURE.

I WATCHED as they stood before it, —
A girl with a face as fair
As any among the marbles,
So cold in their whiteness there;

And a youth in whose glance, entreaty
Each lineament seemed to stir,
She only had eyes for the sculpture;
He only had eyes for her.

And poising in critic-fashion
The delicate upturned head,
"Was ever so sweet a beggar?"
With sudden appeal, she said.

"Just look at the innocent archness,
The simple and childish grace,

Half mirthful and half pathetic,
That dimples his pleading face.

"Who ever could think that mischief
Was hidden in such a guise?
Or even that rosy sorrows
Lurk in those lambent eyes?

"*Deny him?* Perhaps! though never
With hardness or scorn or blame;
For I think I should sob with pity,
If that were the way he came."

She turned as she spoke: the glamour
Of feeling had made her blind
To the trick of the stealthy arrow
The Cupid concealed behind:

"Ah, ha!" she cried, while the color
Rubied her neck of snow —
"You plausible, wheedling beggar!
I have nothing to give you, — Go!"

HOW HILDA'S PRAYER WAS ANSWERED.

AN OLD SAXON BALLAD.

"On him who conquers in the lists
All who therein shall ride;
Or high or low, I will bestow
My daughter as his bride."

So spake the Earl with suitors vexed,
Who sought fair Hilda's hand;
To whom he dare no choice declare,
Since rapine ruled the land.

For should he smile on Harold's hopes,
Then Bertric's wrath would fall;
And spear and lance might gleam and glance
Around his castle wall.

And should he frown on lesser squires,
Nor grant them word of grace,

Each Saxon churl his curse would hurl
Against his name and race.

So Hilda nursed a gnawing grief
Concealed within her breast:
For well she knew the knight so true
Who long had loved her best —

Would meet that rival in the jousts
Whose arm a brand could fling
(His only claim) with surest aim
Of all within the ring.

"The prowest spirit of them all,
May fail among them there, —
So true he was — and just because
This carl can split a hair!"

"Beseech thee, father! spare thy child!
I plead by every tear
Of anguish shed that day of dread
Above my mother's bier."

"Peace! peace! — no more! My word is passed:"
'T was all the Earl would say:

So forth they hied from far and wide
Upon the tilting-day.

Thrice Harold's daring swept the ring,
But when the lists were done,
A blasting blight smote Hilda's sight —
For Bertric's lance had won!

The grim Earl held his promise fast;
The marriage-day was set;
And Hilda, pale beneath her veil
As snow-swathed violet —

Long in her oratory prayed,
Low bowed in bitter gloom,
That Heaven, even now — she knew not how —
Would save her from her doom.

"The bridegroom chafes" — her maidens urge,
"The gay procession waits;
Thy palfrey champs the bit, and stamps
Impatient at the gates."

"*His* gift!" — she wept: "O happy hours —
So free — so far away!

What cruelty, that *this* should be
The roan I ride to-day!"

The palfrey pricked his silken ear,
And shook his shining mane,
And seemed to know how loath to go
Was she who drew the rein.

And when the distant abbey bell
Rang forth the wedding peals,
At the first clang, away he sprang
As Fate were at his heels.

With flashing hoofs that spurned the ground
Along the vale he flew,
Fleet as the wind, ere those behind
Bethought them what to do: —

Swept past the abbey — down the slope —
Across the brawling tide,
And skimmed the wold whose moorland rolled
Unhedged on every side —

Nor slackened once his headlong plunge
Till at his master's hall,

He heard a shout he knew, ring out —
Then saw the drawbridge fall —

And staggered over. From his neck
Half crazed with wild alarms,
The shuddering bride was caught — to hide
Her swoon in Harold's arms!

He bore her to the utmost tower,
And thence they watched the race,
As in keen quest each wedding-guest
Came spurring on apace.

The fiery Bertric dashed in front —
Foam frothing from the flank
Of the hot steed, urged on full speed
Against the moated bank.

As rose the lifted hoofs in air,
The maddened creature whirled;
And down the steep with backward leap,
Rider and horse were hurled!

And when on-coming followers sprang
To raise the fallen head,
With strange dismay the gallants gay
Saw that their lord was dead!

CAMBRIDGE BELLS.

O Cambridge bells, toll out your knells!
O listeners, bow the reverent head,
While tears as vain as April rain
Fall for your dearest poet dead!

Weep, childhood's bands, whose happy hands
Wove, as it were but yesterday,
Wreaths for the brow too pallid now
For aught but an immortal bay.

Ah wailing hearts, whose keenest smarts
His spell had power to soften o'er,
Till all your fears dissolved in tears: —
His voice can comfort you no more!

Glad homes, so bright with all delight,
Sing low his songs with saddened breath:
As sweet a tongue as ever sung
Is palsied with the touch of death.

Translucent skies on which his eyes
Were wont with tranquil gaze to rest, —
Beyond your blue he pierces through
The Golden Legend of the west.

Broad meadows where the grass springs fair,
No more he 'll thread your winding path,
Nor watch the wain heaped high with grain,
Nor loiter 'mid the Aftermath.

O land whose pride he was ! beside
His grave let tears the tenderest fall :
Within your choir is hushed the lyre
That was the sweetest of them all !

THE ROMAN BOY'S SHARE IN THE TRIUMPH.

A. D. 61.

WITH A PICTURE.

"I HAVE witnessed the great Ovation,
I have watched as they slew the sheep;
As they marched from the Campus Martius
Up the Capitolium's steep:
I was proud as I saw my father
From the fiery East come home,
I was proud as I looked on the captives
And the spoils he had brought to Rome.

"Ah, Rome is a grand old city,
And it flushes my soul with joy,
That my father has won a Triumph—
That I am a Roman Boy!
I am glad of the glorious conquests
He gained on the far-off shore,

That has given the State a splendor
It scarcely hath known before!

"It was noble to see the captives,
(Poor fellows! I think they wept!)
Go chained, as the car of the victor
Behind them in triumph swept:
Have *they* any boys, I wonder,
Like Marcus and me, at home?
Who cares? They are bold plebeians,
They have dared to fight with Rome!

"But now that the march is over,
Ho! *comites*, come and see
What spoil from that Eastern country
My father hath brought for me!
Here — lean from the wide *fenestra*
And look at this branching bough —
Did ever you see together
Such birds as I show you now?

"How wise they are looking at me!
Ha, Claudius! didst thou say

Some of Minerva's nestlings
From Athens are caught away?
They are angry that they are fettered —
See! each of them frowns and scowls —
I think thou art right, my Claudius,
I think they 're Minerva's owls.

"And look at this curious trophy —
This thing that they call a fan,
It once was an Indian Satrap's
In far-away Hindostan —
They tell me it grew on a palm-tree
In its Eastern forest home,
As lofty — my father said it —
As the loftiest tower in Rome.

"And mark what a shield he brought me,
Not one in his legions bore
A trophy of greater beauty,
Or one that hath cost him more:
For his own good sword hath won it,
And 'Keep it,' he said, 'my son,
As proof of a deed of valor
A soldier of Rome hath done!'

"I will keep it: and when my girdle
Gives place to the *toga* — then
Right brave on my arm I 'll wear it,
When I fight, as a man, with men.
Oh, ho! — I will get me conquests,
And laden with spoils, come home,
And march, as to-day my father
Has marched through the streets of Rome!

"I am glad I have seen the Ovation,
And the slaughtering of the sheep —
(I wish I had missed the seeing
Those poor, chained captives weep!) —
I am proud of my foreign trophies,
I am proud of my father's joy —
And over all else, I am proudest
That I am a Roman Boy!"

SAME-SICKNESS.

1.

My mountains curve against the sky,
A line of beauty pure and true,
Beyond what English Hogarth drew;
And yet I watch with half a sigh
Their changing lights, and wonder why
I weary of their depth of blue.

2.

No greener valley, forest-walled,
This land of hill and dale can show:
Through summer's shine, through winter's snow,
Its loveliness has never palled
Upon the senses it enthralled,
Till now; — and now it tires me so!

3.

What rippling river ever ran
More like a river in a dream,

Than this, whose sliding waters gleam
Beneath the bridge's airy span,
As silvery as waters can?
And yet, to-day, how dull they seem!

4.

The sheen of window-panes, that catch
The glint, recurrent mornings trace
On yonder hillside dwelling-place,
So irksome grows, I 'm fain to snatch
My vision from the square bright patch
That always stares me in the face.

5.

And yet the mountains have not lost
One grace out of their splendid line;
And yet the valley forests shine
More brilliant through the jewelled frost;
And yet the stream has never tossed
Back flashes that were more divine.

6.

My eye is just as clear to note
Nature's processions, great and small;

These oaks whose leaves refuse to fall;
That meadow where the shadows float:
But then — I 've learned the scene by rote,
And spoiled the meaning of it all.

HER WEDDING-SONG.

I.

O April air!
Blow fresh and fair,
And banish every cloud away,
Nor let a stain
Of mist or rain
Obscure her perfect Wedding-Day.

II.

O violets! fling
The breath of spring
With lavish waste along her way;
Roses distil
Your sweets, and spill
Their rareness round her Wedding-Day.

III.

O birds! prolong
Your matin song,

And trill your gladdest roundelay,
As if ye, too,
Would add your due
Of joy to grace her Wedding-Day.

IV.

O tender hearts!
Whose loving arts
Must let no quivering tone betray
The sob beneath:
Your blessing breathe,
To sanctify her Wedding-Day.

V.

O mother! come,
With lips too dumb
To utter half your soul would say;
And seal her bliss
With prayer and kiss:
The holiest of her Wedding-Day!

VI.

O father! hold
In speechless fold

The child whom now you give away,
With tremulous breath,
For life, for death, —
On this her solemn Wedding-Day.

VII.

O you who stand
And clasp her hand,
And vow to cherish her alway!
The troth you bring
With plighted ring,
Shall consecrate her Wedding-Day.

VIII.

O peace of God!
Shed all abroad
Thy benediction now, I pray;
That she may own
Thy love alone
Can crown supreme her Wedding-Day.

THE ANGEL UNAWARE.

ABROAD on the landscape pale and cold,
Blurred with a patter of autumn rain,
I gazed, and questioned if it could hold
Ever the sweet, old joy again.
The color had faded from earth and sky,
Mists hung low where the light had lain,
And through the willows a fretful sigh
Moaned as their branches swept the pane.

"My days must darken as these," I said —
"Out of my life must summer go;
Its russeted memories, dim and dead,
Shiver along my pathway so;
No more the elastic life come back —
The leap of heart and the spirit-glow
That never had sense of loss or lack,
Whether my lot were glad or no."

But here on my musings broke a child,
Fresh from a rush in the pinching air;
And, kissing my hand, she gayly smiled,
Speaking no word, but leaving there
A handful of heart's-ease, blithe and bright.
What had become of my cloud of care?
It had haloed itself in a ring of light
Over the angel unaware!

NATURE'S THRENODY.

P. H. H.

I.

A MURMUR, sad as far-off muffled bells,
Goes faintly soughing through the shivering pines;
The thrill as of a thousand kissed farewells
Stirs into tremors all the drooping vines;
The trailing muscadines
Forget to take their autumn splendor on,
And wring their hands with gesture of despair
Athwart the spicy air,
Because the voice that sang to them is gone.

II.

Along the hemlock aisles the winds complain
Like chanting priests. I catch the measured tread
Of weeping Oreads, following twain by twain;
While Dryads bear the pale and silent dead,
Couched on a fragrant bed
Of pines, marsh-mallows, and the golden-rod;
And reverently beneath the cedar shade,

Where they his grave have made,
They wrap him in the autumn's russet sod.

III.

I hear the whippoorwill within the vale,
In tones that break my heart, its dirge repeat;
The mocking-bird sobs out a troubled wail,
Most melancholy, most divinely sweet,
Because the lingering feet
That paused so oft, to catch the mellow strain
It practised for him, till the daylight's close —
Too well — too well it knows, —
Those lingering feet will never come again.

IV.

The clouds dissolve themselves in pallid mist,
That clings like cere-cloths. In the southern breeze
All gladness dies, by solemn memories whist;
The patter of the rain amid the trees
Is like the moan of seas
After the wreck. And all this silence shed
O'er nature, like a diapason pause,
Has come to pass, because
The poet who has led the choir is dead!

EVEN-SONG.

1.

THERE 'LL come a day when the supremest splendor
Of earth or sky or sea,
Whate'er their miracles, sublime or tender,
Will wake no joy in me.

2.

There 'll come a day when all the aspiration,
Now with such fervor fraught,
As lifts to heights of breathless exaltation,
Will seem a thing of naught.

3.

There 'll come a day when riches, honor, glory,
Music and song and art,
Will look like puppets in a worn-out story,
Where each has played his part.

4.

There 'll come a day when human love, the sweetest
Gift that includes the whole
Of God's grand giving — sovereignest, completest —
Shall fail to fill my soul.

5.

There 'll come a day — I will not care how passes
The cloud across my sight,
If only, lark-like, from earth's nested grasses,
I spring to meet its light.

SONNETS.

THE POET'S ANSWER.

"WHENCE did it come?"—No conscious thought of mine
Chose out the theme, as from Carrara's stone
The sculptor chooses the one block alone
Best fitted to embody his divine
Ideal of beauty. But before one line
Forecasts the form as Fancy sees it shown
Perfect, or yet a mallet-chip is thrown
Off from the mass that hides his clear design,—
Suppose a flash of quick, electric light
Should daze the sculptor's eye, and he should see
Step from the stone, evoked as by a spell,
The statue of his dream, Persephone:
So sprang my poem forth, revealed to sight;
But by what magic wrought, I cannot tell.

WE TWO.

Ah, painful-sweet! how can I take it in!
That somewhere in the illimitable blue
Of God's pure space, which men call Heaven, we two
Again shall find each other, and begin
The infinite life of love, a life akin
To angels, — only angels never knew
The ecstasy of blessedness that drew
Us to each other, even in this world of sin.

Yea, find each other! The remotest star
Of all the galaxies would hold in vain
Our souls apart, that have been heretofore,
As closely interchangeable as are
One mind and spirit: Oh, joy that aches to pain,
To be together — we two — forever more!

HESTIA.

O GENTLE Goddess of the Grecian hearth,
Whose altar was the cheerful table spread;
Whose sacrifice, the pleasant daily bread,
Offered with incense of sweet childhood's mirth,
And parent's priestly ministration, worth
More than all other rites that ever shed
Light on the path that those young feet must tread —
Has thy pure worship ceased from off the earth?

We heap new fires; we overbrim the bowl,
Yet shiver, hungry. To our inmost shrine,
The obtrusive world finds way. Abroad we roam,
In discontent of household oil and wine;
And wherefore so? Because the kindling coal
We bring not from the sacred hearth of home!

ART'S LIMITATIONS.

This rich, rank age — does it need giants now,
Dantes, and Angelos, and Shakespeares? Nay,
Its culture is of other sort to-day,
That concentrates no power — that doth allow
Growths which divide the strength that should endow
The one tall trunk — that fails to lop away,
With wise reserve, the shoots which lead astray
The wasted sap to some collateral bough.

Had Dante chiselled stone — had Angelo
Intrigued at courts — had Shakespeare cramped his power
With critic-gauge of Drayton, Chaucer, Gower —
What lack there were of that refreshing shade
Which these high-towered, centurial oaks have made,
Where walk the happy nations to and fro!

FLOOD-TIDE.

TO THE POET ——.

To every artist, howsoe'er his thought
Unfolds itself before the eyes of men, —
Whether through sculptor's chisel, poet's pen,
Or painter's wondrous brush, — there comes, full fraught
With instant revelation, lightning-wrought,
A moment of supremest heart-swell, when
The mind leaps to the tidal crest, and then
Sweeps on triumphant to the harbor sought.

Wait, eager spirit, till the topping waves
Shall roll their gathering strength in one, and lift
From out the swamping trough thy galleon free;
Mount with the whirl, command the rush that raves
A maelstrom round; then proudly shoreward drift,
Rich-freighted as an Indian argosy!

ABNEGATION.

"The mother of Jesus saith unto Him: They have no wine."
St. John.

How countless are the souls for whom the days
Are empty of all stimulating glow
That sends the bounding blood with quickened flow
Along the tingling veins, — who never raise
Their heavy eyes beyond the flinty ways
Their daily feet must tread, — who never know
This world is good, because of cares that so
Thorn every step of life's laborious maze!

The plodding peasants, they must plant and rear,
And weed and water, that the teeming soil
May yield its richness to the clustered vine, —
Must tramp the grapes until their juice run clear
For lordly lips; — and yet, for all their toil,
Taste not the flagon filled: *They have no wine!*

OVER-CONTENT.

I WOULD not be too happy in the joys
That so fulfil my life : I would not rest
Too satisfied, if gifts the very best
God grants, were mine : — the bliss that never cloys,
Born of Love's perfectness ; the equipoise
Exact of flesh and spirit, that keeps youth's zest
Still at its acme : — genius whose behest
Art waits upon ; all nature to rejoice
My sated soul : — Lest, haply, when I hear
My Father call, child-wise I say, — Let be ;
So many gracious things Thou givest me, —
Such store of present good from far and near,
Such full contentment with my sunny cheer,
Why should I come ? What need have I for *Thee ?*

IN THE PANTHEON.

JANUARY 17, 1878.

In all the score of centuries that have fled
Since the victorious Roman reared on high
This dome, ceiled with the overarching sky,
None of the mighty ones, august and dread,
Whose deeds have won for them an honored bed
Here, in these statued, seven-fold niches high,
Have nobler claim than *he* hath thus to lie,
Whom Italy to-day bears hither, dead.
As through yon dome's blue circlet, oft of yore,[1]
They showered white leaves, when votive prayers were done,
So let white benediction-memories fall
Around this king; — *his* service being o'er; —
Who found his sundered realm wild Faction's thrall,
And left it free, compacted, peaceful, one!

[1] "Formerly, when the Popes officiated here on the day of Pentecost, white rose-leaves were scattered through the aperture in the dome."

MENDELSSOHN'S REWARD.

Tranced with his matchless skill, the royal pair
Sat hearkening, while the great composer's hand
Urged on at will (as if superb command
Of the wide waves of sound were his to share),
Careering harmonies, that brake in rare
Crowned culminations, as upon the strand
The over-poise of surge breaks, leaving grand
Subsiding murmurs on the vibrant air.

Then spake the Queen: "An hour of pure delight
Has been your gift to us; beseech you, say,
What now can *we* bestow, our thanks to tell?
The kind musician's eye grew softly bright:
"I am a father; it would please me well
To see the royal children at their play."

"PHILIP, MY KING."

TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

Thou art the same, my friend, about whose brow,
In cradle years, a poet twined the lays
Through which she glorified, in poet's phrase,
Those splendid eyes, that forced her to avow
Heart-fealty to thee, her liege, and bow
Before thy regal looks, with regal praise
Of more enduring freshness than the bays
Which blatant crowds bind for their heroes now.

Had she prevision that above those eyes
God meant to press His hand, the better so
To cage the lark-like spirit? Should it soar
Too deep into the sapphire of the skies,
We earthly listeners, standing far below,
Must fail to catch the ethereal music more.

MOODS.

I.

MORNING.

It is enough: I feel this golden morn,
As if a royal appanage were mine,
Through Nature's queenly warrant of divine
Investiture. What princess, palace-born,
Hath right of rapture more, when skies adorn
Themselves so grandly? — when the mountains shine
Transfigured? — the air exalts the wine? —
When pearly purples steep the yellowing corn?

So satisfied with all the goodliness
Of God's good world, — my being to its brim
Surcharged with utter thankfulness, no less
Than bliss of beauty, passionately glad,
Through rush of tears that leaves the landscape dim,
"Who dares," — I cry — "in such a world be sad?"

II.

NIGHT.

I PRESS my cheek against the window-pane,
And gaze abroad into the blank, black space
Where earth and sky no more have any place,
Wiped from existence by the expunging rain:
And as I hear the worried winds complain,
A darkness darker than the murk whose trace
Invades the curtained room, is on my face,
Beneath which life and life's best ends seem vain.

My proudest aspirations viewless sink
As yon cloud-blotted hills: hopes that shone bright
Last eve, as planets, like the stars to-night,
Are hidden, eclipsed, as never heretofore:
"O weary world," — I cry — "how dare I think
Thou hast for me one gleam of gladness more?"

HUMAN PROVIDENCE.

I WOULD not, if I could, arrange the how,
The what, the wherefore of to-morrow's plan:
Omniscience whose supremest eye doth scan
All time, all being as one eternal Now,
Devoid of the stern sequences that bow
Our wills, and bar their action, only can
Previse for each of us the bounded span
To walk or work in, as He shall allow.

Or if we dare, like Israel of old,
In unbelief, to seize the manna spread
In white abundance round our tents to-day,
Because we doubt of our to-morrow's bread, —
Not even an Aaron's priestly pot of gold
Shall keep the o'er-gathered portion from decay!

HORIZONS.

A PUPIL of the grand old Florentine
  Paused at his work, one day, in hopeless guise —
  Head bowed despondent, over-wearied eyes,
And fingers, whose long labor at the line
So cramped their force that now they dropt supine:
  The master saw the failure; yet too wise
  To chide, in letters of the largest size
Scored "*Amplius!* — *Amplius!*" o'er the pinched
    design.

So, when we toil within our narrow groove
  Till energies succumb, and timorous Doubt
Achieves no conquest, as the days go on, —
  Let but some master-thought the spell disprove,
By widening our horizons, broadening out
  Our warping views — and lo! despair is gone!

THE LESSON OF THE LEAF.

Behold this blade of grass — its lightest sway
Owns Nature's touch — the worldling's name for God:
It does not hold itself erect, nor nod
Before the breeze, nor turn to meet the day,
Nor catch the dew-drop dripping from the spray
Of yonder overarching golden-rod,
Nor droop a wilted stem upon the sod,
Save with one instinct only — to obey.

But man, supreme of God's creation, dares
Deny His Being's law, and overpass
All his clear intuitions. Not to *him*
Belongs such meed of merit as compares
Even with the inarticulate praise, — the dim
Dumb nature-worship of the blade of grass!

WHEREFORE?

Had the blind bard of Chios, in the stress
Of wandering, asked this question, — where would be
Those marvellous stories, his rich legacy
To all the ages since? Had the access
Of Michael's scorn been potent to repress
The grand creations, which *he*, verily,
Cared not that men should praise, what majesty
Out of Art's realm were lost! Had soft idlesse
To Raphael whispered — "Fling thy brush away
And take thine ease," — what types of beauty were
Snatched from our vision! If Cervantes' fare
Had starved his soul, and braved it to resist
Each mirthful quip, to dire despair a prey —
What echoing laughter would the world have missed!

MEDALLION HEADS.

I.

SASKIA.[1]

The lovely Friesland maiden whom the pride
Inherent in her old patrician race
Forbade not to renounce her birthright's place,
And seek her marriage bliss at Rembrandt's side,
Had recompense, to Friesland's best denied:
For, never wearying of the auroral grace
Of Northern lights that flashed about her face,
He for all time her beauty glorified.

Her soul lies mute on each Madonna's mouth;
Her blonde hair floats across Bathsheba's breasts;
Her mingled snow-and-roses kindle up
Susannah's cheeks; as Hagar in her drouth,
She droops; and 'mid Ahasuerus' guests
She sits, Queen Esther with the jewelled cup.

[1] Wife of Rembrandt.

II.

VITTORIA COLONNA.

Serene and sad and still, she sat apart
In widowed saintliness, an unvowed nun,
Whose duty to the world without was done;
And yet concealing with unselfish art
The scars of grief, the pangs of loss, the smart
Of pain, she suffered not herself to shun
The hurt, and bruised, and wronged, who one by one
Sought sanctuary of her cloistered heart.

But to that loneliest soul, who found in her
His type of womanhood, supremest set,
And knew not whether he should kneel or no, —
Such sweet, strange comfort did she minister,
That, were this deed her all, the world would yet
Have loved her for the sake of Angelo!

III.

LA FORNARINA.

Who can believe that he was thralled by *this?*
This creature wrought of flesh not over fine,
With brazen brow, and mouth whose sensual line
Holds no red sting of rapture in its kiss? —
This splendid animal, for whom life is
Mere pleased existence, pagan, undivine, —
Without a glimpse of soul, without a sign
That she could fathom the soundless depths of his?

We see the legend on her armlet traced,
"*Raphael Urbinas:*" yet deny that one
So born for love, so gracious, calm, and sweet,
So like a glad Greek god, with beauty graced,
Could yield to toils such as Calypso spun, —
Could stoop at such an earthly woman's feet!

IV.

LUCREZIA.[1]

The pretty fool's face, with its white and red,
Its perfect oval, its bewitching pout;
The nimbus-shine of shimmering hair about
The Dian curve of brow; the well-poised head;
The rare-ripe, melting form; the princess' tread, —
All lured his artist nature to devout
Love for a siren, who that Art could scout,
And barter for the gold it brought instead.

Senza errori: — Florence so did call
The master Michael loved, and Raphael praised:
But when Lucrezia breathed her blighting breath
Across his faultless canvas, thenceforth all
His genius seemed to shrivel; till hopeless, crazed,
His life's mistake found sole redress in death.

[1] Wife of Andrea del Sarto.

V.

FRAU AGNES.

FROM page to page they still repeat the wrong, —
How Agnes, with her shrewish marriage-ways,
Saddened the gentle Nuremberger's days,
Until the silken tie became a thong
Wherewith she pinioned him in bondage strong:
Yet who can lay his finger on a phrase
That proves it so? or cite a word's dispraise
Of her, his true 'housereckoner' [1] all life long?

One spiteful line has furnished forth the stuff
Whose hempen coil has strangled the fair name
Thus filched from Albrecht's wife, the centuries through;
For if the love she gave was not enough,
Or if his bosom nursed some fonder flame
That perished, surely Agnes never knew.

[1] Dürer's playful designation of his wife in his letters.

VI.

QUINTIN MATSYS' BRIDE.

An artist's daughter, she, — a toiler, he,
At the grim forge: all Antwerp well might stare
Upon him as a madman, that he dare
Aspire to hope, in face of the decree
Passed by parental pride, — that none should be
Received as suitor who should fail to bear
In hand — his own true work — a picture rare
Enough to prove his worth of such as she.

Yet nothing is impossible to Love:
Soon through the city rang the cry abroad, —
"*Behold the miracle of Matsys' Saint!*"
Blind Genius felt Art's touch, as of a god;
Had faith and saw! — And graven still above
His head, we read: "*Love taught the smith to paint.*"[1]

[1] "*Connubialis amor de Mulcibre fecit Apellem.*" — Inscription on the Cathedral wall at Antwerp.

CHILDHOOD OF THE OLD MASTERS.

TO MY LITTLE ART-LOVERS,

MARGARET AND JANET.

CHILDHOOD OF THE OLD MASTERS.

LEONARDO'S ANGEL.[1]

PIETRO DA VINCI.[2]

You see this boy, — a spoiled and restless lad
Who needs must fret his father, — (eh, my boy?)
With projects changeful as the hours, nor yet
In any find content? From chosen sports
Among the Alban hills, with horses, hounds,
And *contadini*, — here he flurries back
To Florence, and once more is at his tricks
Of carving, daubing panels, and the like, —
Your most refractory pupil, as I deem.
And nothing now will serve but that he watch

[1] Art-visitors to Florence will recall the Angel — painted by Leonardo when a pupil of Verocchio — which, in a corner of one of this master's frescoes, seems to light up the whole dark picture.

[2] Father of Leonardo.

You at distemper-work, which he will find
Needs just a hint from him to perfect it:
For the young arrogant has never owned
Distrust of self since he was tall enough
To draw my poniard forth, and scare his nurse
With passes —

LEONARDO.

Nay, but father, grant me now
The skill for what I *can* do; — curb the colt
That 's wildest in your stalls; — lead on the hounds,
And fly the hawks: or from an ilex-knot,
Carve out a shrine, my sister praises more
Than Donatello's cuttings; or frame flutes
You own make music to your mind: or paint
A saint's face for some teasing servant-maid
To say her prayers to; or —

VEROCCHIO.

O modest youth!
Will panels not content you, that you even
Must brave your master in his chosen line?
I dare be sworn you think his practised hand
Would yield to yours, upon a frescoed wall!

LEONARDO.

Just since I 've watched your way, my fingers itch
To snatch a brush, and try —

PIETRO.

That shall he not!
Forthwith he 'll want to drag our hangings down,
And splash us round with hunting-scenes, and make
Our dining-hall tumultuous.

LEONARDO.

Father, pray —
If but my master trust me with his tools —
Just once! — the cunning little angel there,
Half-outlined in the corner: let me flood
Him into rosiness; I can — I *can!*

PIETRO.

You always want your way: Verocchio, chide
Your pupil's insolence.

VEROCCHIO.

I 'll blot his work
Easy enough, my lord; so let him daub:

'T will do him good to fail.

(*Leonardo seizes a brush, and paints vehemently.*)

PIETRO.

Why, boy! eh, boy!
I did not dream you could: Verocchio, see:
That angel has this moment dropped from heaven!

VEROCCHIO.

San Luca! why, I never dreamed of this!
I let no pupil watch me while I work
In mortar: yet the boy hath caught the art
Unlessoned: what a touch is his! and look, —
His strayling clouds *my* angels out of sight!

PIETRO.

So! so! he mars your picture thus — confess!
But here 's a purse. How shall I make amends?

VEROCCHIO.

You never can: Why, that one vision there,
Cheapens my work below my own contempt,
And turns my saints to purgatorial souls
Whom I begin to hate.

PIETRO.

Nay, nay! wipe out
The interloper then: he shall not stay
To vex you: 't is a varlet's trick to chafe
Your patience so.

VEROCCHIO.

But he shall stay, to prove
That fifty years of skill must yield before
The genius that can pluck, at one first grasp,
The heart of all my hard-won secrets out.
Throw by your narrow panels, boy, and match
With frescoes' breadth, your strength —

LEONARDO.

Ha! say you so?
— The very hungriest of my desires!
My angel, see, entreats. I 'll make the walls
Of our grim chapel in the Apennines
Alive with flowery wreaths of seraphs, till
My father even will fancy that he walks
In Paradise, with Dante, whom he loves.

VEROCCHIO.

And I, from this day forward, I fling down
My brush forever! Fifty years of pains
Quenched by the maiden effort of fifteen!
Let genius have its way; — I paint no more.

GIOTTO'S FIRST PICTURE.

A. D. 1286.

THROUGH the Tuscan meadows dewy
Walked the painter, Cimabuè;
Full of fancies sweet and holy,
On and on he rambled slowly,
Till he saw the pastures spotted
White with flocks, like daisies dotted
O'er the grass; and close behind them,
One small shepherd-lad to mind them.
Still as any stock of mullein,
There he sat; not sad nor sullen,
Though without a comrade near him,
And with only sheep to cheer him.

Round about, the flock came trooping,
Yet the boy sat quiet — stooping
O'er a broad, flat stone before him,
With the sunshine flooded o'er him.
Stepping through the verdure dewy,
O'er his shoulder Cimabuè

Leaned and watched with silent wonder,
For he saw clear outlined, under
Fingers coal-begrimed and blackened, —
Nor for him their labor slackened,
As he stood there, — portrait-traces
Of his flock's unconscious faces,
Drawn as never yet he saw them,
Drawn as never *he* could draw them.

"Little shepherd, who did teach you
Drawing? tell me, I beseech you!
(And the questioner's eye was dewy)
He who asks is Cimabuè."

Up the boy sprang, startled, blushes
Crimsoning his face with flushes;
"— Not the painter! Ah, if only
I could meet him wandering lonely
Through these pastures, I would ask him
Whether I might dare to task him,
Just to show, with lightest traces
How he draws his angel-faces!"

"Yes, the painter! I will take you
Home with me, my boy, and make you

Such a *maestro* as I never
Could be, if I drew forever!"

So to Florence in its beauty
Giotto came; and true to duty,
Wrought and studied, fast and faster,
Till he grew the greatest master
Of a time when arts were scanty:
He it was who painted Dante;
And the martyrs, saints, and sages
Of those picture-loving ages.
But his genius came to flower
When he reared the marvellous Tower,
Graceful as a Tuscan lily,
Which they called the Campanile.

Little tourist, if you ever
Visit Florence, you will never —
Be your art-love stronger, fainter —
Quite forget the shepherd-painter.
You will think upon his story;
You will go to Del Fiorè,
And the guide will show the grotto
There, in which they buried Giotto.

FRA ANGELICO'S BOYHOOD.

A. D. 1412.

Come Marco, and see the grotto where
Our little *maestro* goes for prayer,
And paints with a sort of rapture there.

Not know him? — Why he is the childlike saint,
With whom the village is all acquaint,
Who never does aught but pray and paint.

And he is the boy who walked away
Across the valley, one bright spring day,
To find Masaccio — as they say:

That so he might learn of the Master, how
Rightly to circle Our Lady's brow
With a halo she wears in glory now.

And oh! but he draws her wondrous fair,
Such splendor behind her golden hair —
And garments as blue as the summer air!

And the best of it is — he makes you feel,
Unless you 've a heart as hard as steel,
There 's nothing for you to do but kneel!

They say that before his lip could frame
A syllable's sound, one day there came
From his baby mouth — Our Lord's dear name.

And all of his early childish plays
Had something to do with churchly ways —
And his songs, if he sang, were songs of praise.

When the scarlet poppies were all a-blow,
Away to the wheat-fields he would go,
And gather the finest ones that grow, —

Purple and yellow, blue and white,
And hasten home with a strange delight,
And out of them make a wondrous sight.

Such cardinals in their crimson dress!
Such bishops with fingers raised to bless!
Such nuns in their snowy loveliness!

And then to his grotto would he call
His chosen companions, one and all,
And there on his knees devoutly fall.

No wonder they call him The Little Saint,
For now that he 's old enough to paint,
They tell me he weeps without restraint,

Low-bowed in the dust — and asks for grace
Before he will let his pencil trace
A single line of Our Lady's face!

One day he will be a monk, I trow,
Already his comrades deeming so,
Have christened him Fra Angelico.

BEHIND THE ARRAS.

A. D. 1486.

I.

"Nay, father, 't is weary day by day,
In stones and in metals to work away
At the goldsmith's tiresome trade" —

"Ah, so?
A 'tiresome trade!' I 'd have thee know
That silver and gold are precious things,
And the gems we cut are gems for kings
To wear in their crowns" —

"But, father, hear!
Thou ever hast been so kind and dear,
That now I am bold to ask what yet
I never ventured — that thou wouldst let
Me follow my bent; for I would paint
Pictures of many and many a saint
For the shrines where people kneel; and when

I come to be famous, father, then
Thy heart will flutter with inward joy,
To think that the painter is thy boy."

"The whim of a lad! What proof have I
Of the bent thou boastest?"

"Let me try
The strength there is in me. Let me take
A panel just like Van Eyck's, and make
No holy Madonna thereon, nor Christ,
Nor such as the masters have sufficed,
But only myself: for I will place
Yon Flemish mirror before my face,
And copy the form I find therein;
And then, if the portrait fails to win
The recognition of those who go
To school with me every day — why, so
I'll bend to thy will, and own I 'm made
To follow my father's goldsmith trade.
Do the terms content thee?"

"Yea, if thou,
Unaided, dost paint a portrait now,

Which all at St. Sebald's school agree
Can only be thine — well, then we 'll see
Which craftman's tools are the tools for thee."

II.

"My picture is finished, father. Call
The boys of St. Sebald, one and all,
Straight into the shop. On a panel there,
Near the head Van Eyck has painted, where
They well can see it, my work is hung,
With an antique bit of arras flung
Round it, whereby, in sooth, I meant
To make them believe it came from Ghent."

"Well, well, as thou wilt. My silver dove
Is finished, and ready to perch above
St. Barbara's shrine. (The one, I wis,
Let loose by Noah was like to this,
As it flew from the ark so pure and white.)
The scholars will want to come to-night, —
For I promised them all, the other day
They should see it before it was sent away —
And then, as I said, if they declare
That thine are the eyes, the mouth, the hair —

Just thine and none other's — why, thou mayst use
Thy will, and have leave which craft to choose.
— Ah, here are the boys!
— My task is done,
Sweet lads! Is the dove a pretty one?"

"One lovelier never cleaved the sky!
Aye, marry, it seems about to fly:
Look, Jan! it verily winks its eye
At Albrecht yonder, who hides, I ween,
A little beyond the arras screen!"

"No Albrecht is there: he left the door
Just only a moment or two before
Ye entered" —
"Who then, who then, is he
That under the arras stares at me?
'*T is Albrecht Dürer*, beyond a doubt!
Ho, comrades, I think we can drag him out!

"Ah, me! That settles the pact I made:
The boy will give up an honest trade
For the silly brush; yet, mayhap, some day
The world shall hear of him — who can say!"

THE MILAN BIRD-CAGES.

A. D. 1485.

I.

Just four hundred years ago,
(You may like to know) —
In a city old and quaint,
Lived a painter who could paint
Knight or lady, child or saint,
With so rich a glow,
And such wondrous skill as none
In the Land of Art had done.

II.

Should you ever chance to take
(As you will) a foreign tour,
Milan you will see, I 'm sure,
For the Master's sake,
And be shown, in colors dim,
One grand picture drawn by him —

Christ's *Last Supper.* If your eyes
Fill, while gazing, no surprise
Need be either yours or mine,
O'er that face divine.

III.

Then in Paris, if you go
To the great Louvre Gallery, where
Miles of paintings make you stare
Till your eyes ache, they will show
As they point the finest out,
One the world goes mad about —
Such a portrait, all the while
How it haunts you with its smile,
Lovely *Mona Lisa!* she
Can't be bought for gold, you see;
Not if kings should come to buy,
— Let them try!

IV.

Oft the Master used to go
(Old Vasari tells us so)
To the market where they sold
Birds, in cages gay with gold,

Brightly tipped on wing and crest,
Trapped just as they left the nest.
Thither went he day by day,
Buying all within his way,
Making the young peasants glad,
Since they sold him all they had;
And no matter what his store,
Counting birds and cages o'er,
He was always buying more.

v.

"Wherefore buy so many?" Well,
That 's just what I 'm going to tell.
Soon as he had bought a bird,
O'er his upturned head was heard
Such a trill, so glad, so high,
Dropped from out the sunny sky
Down into his happy heart;
Filling it as naught else could —
Naught save his belovèd Art —
Full of joy, as there he stood
Holding wide the wicker door,
Watching the bright captives soar
Deep into the blue. You see

Why he bought so many: He
Did it just to set them free.

VI.

Love I Leonardo so
For his splendid pictures. — No!
But for his sweet soul, so stirred
By a little prisoned bird.

LITTLE TITIAN'S PALETTE.

High up in the Vale of Cadoré
Encompassed by mountains as wild
As the wildness of gloom and of glory
Could make them, dwelt Titian, the child.

The snow-covered ridges and ranges,
The gorges as dusky as night,
The cloud-wracks, the shadows, the changes,
All filled him with dreams of delight.

The flush of the summer, the duller
White sheen of the winter abroad,
Would move him to ecstasy: color,
To him, was a vision of God.

Enraptured his mother would hold him
With legends that never sufficed
To tire him out, as she told him
Of Mary, the Mother of Christ.

"How blue are her eyes?" he would ask her;
"As blue as the harebells I know;
And her cheek?" — (it was so he would task her) —
"Is her cheek like a rose under snow?"

So stirred with the spell of the story,
One day as he wandered alone
Deep into the Vale of Cadoré,
Where blossoms by thousands were strown,

He suddenly cried: "I will paint her!
The darling Madonna! — for, see,
These anemone-buds are not fainter
Than the tint of her temples must be!

"Who ever saw violets bluer?
Their stain is the stain of the skies;
So what could be sweeter or truer
For tingeing the blue of her eyes?

"This rose — why, the sunsets have fed her
Till she looks like a rose of the South;
I never saw one that was redder;
Oh, that, I will keep for her mouth!

"Yon blood-root, as brown as October,
Is just what I want for her hair;
And the juice of this gentian shall robe her
In garments an angel might wear!"

Thus the picture was painted. Long after,
In Venice, the Bride of the Sea,
When he sat amid feasting and laughter,
With guests of the noblest degree —

When his name, and his fame, and his glory,
To the height of the highest arose;
And Titian, the child of Cadoré,
Was Titian, the Master — who knows

If ever his world-widened powers
Were touched with so tender a grace
As when, from his palette of flowers,
He painted that marvellous face!

MICHAEL'S MALLET.

I.

Long, long ago in the olden day,
On a slope of the Tuscan hills, there lay
A village with quarries compassed round,
And blocks of marble that strewed the ground,
And cumbered the streets: and everywhere,
With hammer and chisel, and rule and square,
And cap of paper a-dust and white,
The masons sat chipping from morn till night.

II.

The earliest sound that the boy had heard
Was neither the whistle nor pipe of bird,
Nor bleating of lambs, nor rush of breeze
Through the tops of swaying chestnut trees,
Nor laughter and song, nor whoop and shout
Of the school at the convent just let out:
Nor tinkle of waters plashing sweet
From the dolphin's mouth in the village street.

III.

But first in the morning, sharp and clear,
Came ever to Michael's drowsy ear,
As he waked from slumber, the mallet's knock,
Or the stroke of the hammer that shaped the block.
From the dawn of the day till the twilight came,
The clink of the tools was still the same,
And steadily still the ceaseless chip
Kept time to the fountain's dreamy drip.

IV.

And when he could toddle beyond the door
Of the cottage, in search of a plaything more,
Or venture abroad — a little lad,
What toys do you think were the first he had?
Why, splinters of marble white and pure,
And a mallet to break them with, be sure,
And a chisel to shape them, should he choose,
Just such as he saw the masons use.

V.

So Michael the baby had his way,
And hammered and clipped, and would n't play

With the simple and senseless sort of toys
That pleased the rest of the village boys.
They laughed at the little churches he
With toil would rear at his nurse's knee;
They scouted the pictures that he drew
On the polished slabs with a coal or two;
They jeered and they mocked him when he tried
To model, from rubbish cast aside,
Rude forms — and screamed "*Scultorè!*" when
His bits of marble he shaped like men.

VI.

But who of them dreamed his mallet's sound
Would ever be heard the world around?
Or his mimic churches in time become
The mightiest temple in Christendom?
Or the pictures he painted fill the dome
Of the Sistine's wonderful walls in Rome?
Or the shapings rude of his moulded clay
Be statues that witch the world to-day?
Or the baby that chiselled the splinters so
Be the marvellous Michael Angelo!

GUIDO'S COMPLAINT.

Bologna, 1585.

Ah — what shall I do? They have taken away
My paper and pencils and brushes, and say
I must keep to the harpsichord day after day.

My father is fretted because he foresees
I have not the musical genius to please
The taste of these lute-loving, gay Bolognese.

My mother — dear heart! there is pain in her look,
When she finds me withdrawn in some tapestried nook,
Bent over my drawing instead of my book.

And so, as it daily is coming to pass,
She chides me with idleness, saying, "alas!
They tell me my Guido 's the dunce of his class!"

And Friar Tomasso, the stupid old fool!
Because on my grammar, instead of the rule
I had pencilled his likeness, has whipped me in school.

The boys leaning over, with shoutings began —
"Oh ho! Little Guido Renè is the man
To step after Raphael, if any one can!"

I drew on the side of my chamber, in faint
And delicate outlines, the head of a saint:
My mother has blotted it over with paint.

With coals from the brazier I sketched on the wall
Great Cæsar returning triumphant from Gaul:
The maids brought their whitewash, and covered it all.

And yesterday after the set of the sun,
(I had practised the lute and my lessons were done;)
I went to the garden, and choosing me one

Of the plots yet unplanted, I levelled it fair,
And traced with my finger the famed Gracchan pair
Of brothers: there 's now not a trace of them there.

If only Antonio Caracci could see
My drawings, and know how I 'm thwarted, — ah, he
Is a painter, and so would be sorry for me !

Oh the pictures — the pictures that crowd to my eye !
If they never will let me have brushes to try
And paint them — Madonna ! I think I shall die !

CLAUDE'S JOURNEY.

A. D. 1602.

JACQUES.

WHITHER go you, Master Claude,
With your alpenstock in hand,
And across your breast a band
Like a pedlar, — and a pack
Far too heavy on your back
For a boy of twelve? — I say,
None but guides should be abroad
Such a wild and wintry day:
What is taking you away?

Is not Freiburg just the place
For a skilful lad like you,
Who can cut and carve so true,
Copying Nature's nicest grace?
Has that meddling old lace-vender
Come to tempt you to surrender

All the blessings Jean Gelée
Heaps upon you day by day?

Stay and carve your carvings here
In our Freiburg: You are dear
To us all: But otherwhere
Who will praise your work, or care
If you thrive, or meet disaster, —
If you are a drudge or master?

Let the old lace-vender go:
He has told you tales I know,
Of that far-off Italy,
Till, mayhap, you 're crazed to see
What its sights of beauty be.

CLAUDE.

Nay, good Jacques, — I 'm fain to go
Where I 'll see no Alpine snow —
Where the grim Black Forest's glades
Cannot scare me with their shades;
Caring not though I should roam
Bare-foot over mountains wild,
Like a very gypsy's child,
So that I but get to Rome —

Rome where Michael lived and wrought —
Rome where Raphael painted — where
I shall breathe that living air,
Out of which these masters caught
Something — ah, I know not what!

Stay and carve in Freiburg? — Why
I am mad to paint that sky, —
Stretched so blue above the pines
Of those distant Apennines —
Out of heaven, and fix it fast
In such pictures as shall last
Through the ages.

JACQUES.

—— Drawn, they 'll say,
By some straggler — one Gelée?

CLAUDE.

No! through me some fame shall come,
— You shall see it — to that home
Where with brothers at my side,
All my childhood was a joy —
Where until our father died,
Never breathed a happier boy!

Oh! I 'll bring their out-of-doors
Into gloomy Roman halls:
Oh! I 'll glorify their walls
With a sunshine such as pours
Through that Southern atmosphere,
Colors never dreamed of here!

So — I 'll reach the master's place,
Striving for the noblest fame:
And if strangers, seeing grace
In my pictures, ask my name,
What bethink you I will say
To their question? *Claude Gelée?*
Claude, the Freiburg Carver? Nay!
On my cheek the flush will glow
While my words come proud and slow,
All my patriot blood will swell
As my childhood's home again,
With its beautiful Moselle
Gleams before my vision plain,
And I 'll answer — *Claude Lorraine!*[1]

[1] After Claude became a great painter, he abandoned his family name of Gelée and is known in Art only as Claude Lorraine.

THE BOY VAN DYCK.

A. D. 1608.

In the grey old Flemish city,
Sat a comely, fair-haired dame,
At a window's deep embrasure,
Bending o'er her broidery-frame.
Round her played her merry children,
As they wound about their heads
Fillets, pilfered in their mischief,
From her skeins of arras-threads.

Oft she turned her glance upon them,
Softly smiling at their play,
All the while her busy needle
Pricking in and out its way;
From the open casement gazing,
Where the landscape lay in view,
Striving from her silken treasures,
To portray each varied hue.

"Nay, I cannot," sighed she sadly,
As the threads dropped from her hold,
"Cannot match that steely sapphire,
Or that line of burnished gold.
How it sparkles as it stretches
Straight as any lance across!
Never hint of such a lustre
Lives within my brightest floss!

"Ah that blaze of splendid color!
I could kneel with folded hands,
As I watch it slowly dying
Off the emerald pasture-lands.
How my crimson pales to ashen,
In this flood of sunset hue,
Mocking all my poor endeavor,
Foiling all my skill can do!"

As they heard her sigh, the children
Pressed around their mother's knees:
"Nay" — they clamored — "where in Antwerp
Are there broideries such as these?
Why, the famous master, Rubens,
Craves the piece we think so rare, —

Asks our father's leave to paint it
Flung across the Emperor's chair ! "

" How ye talk ! "— she smiled. " Yet often,
As I draw my needle through,
Gloating o'er my tints, I fancy
I might be a painter too :
I, a woman, wife, and mother,
What have I to do with Art ?
Are not ye my noblest pictures ?
Portraits painted from my heart !

" Yet, I think, if midst my seven,
One should show the master's bent, —
One should do the things I dream of, —
All my soul would rest content."
Straight the four-year-old Antonio
Answered, sobbing half aloud :
" I will be your painter, painting
Pictures that shall made you proud ! "

Quick she snatched this youngest darling,
Smoothing down his golden hair,
Kissing with a crazy rapture,
Mouth and cheek and forehead fair —

Saying mid her sobbing laughter,
"So! my baby! *you* would like
To be named with Flemish Masters,
Rembrandt, Rubens, and — *Van Dyck!*" [1]

[1] The mother of Van Dyck was celebrated for her beautiful tapestry work. From her, her distinguished son inherited that taste for lucid color which has given him the name of "The Silvery Van Dyck."

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